No. 896
Friday
19 April '96

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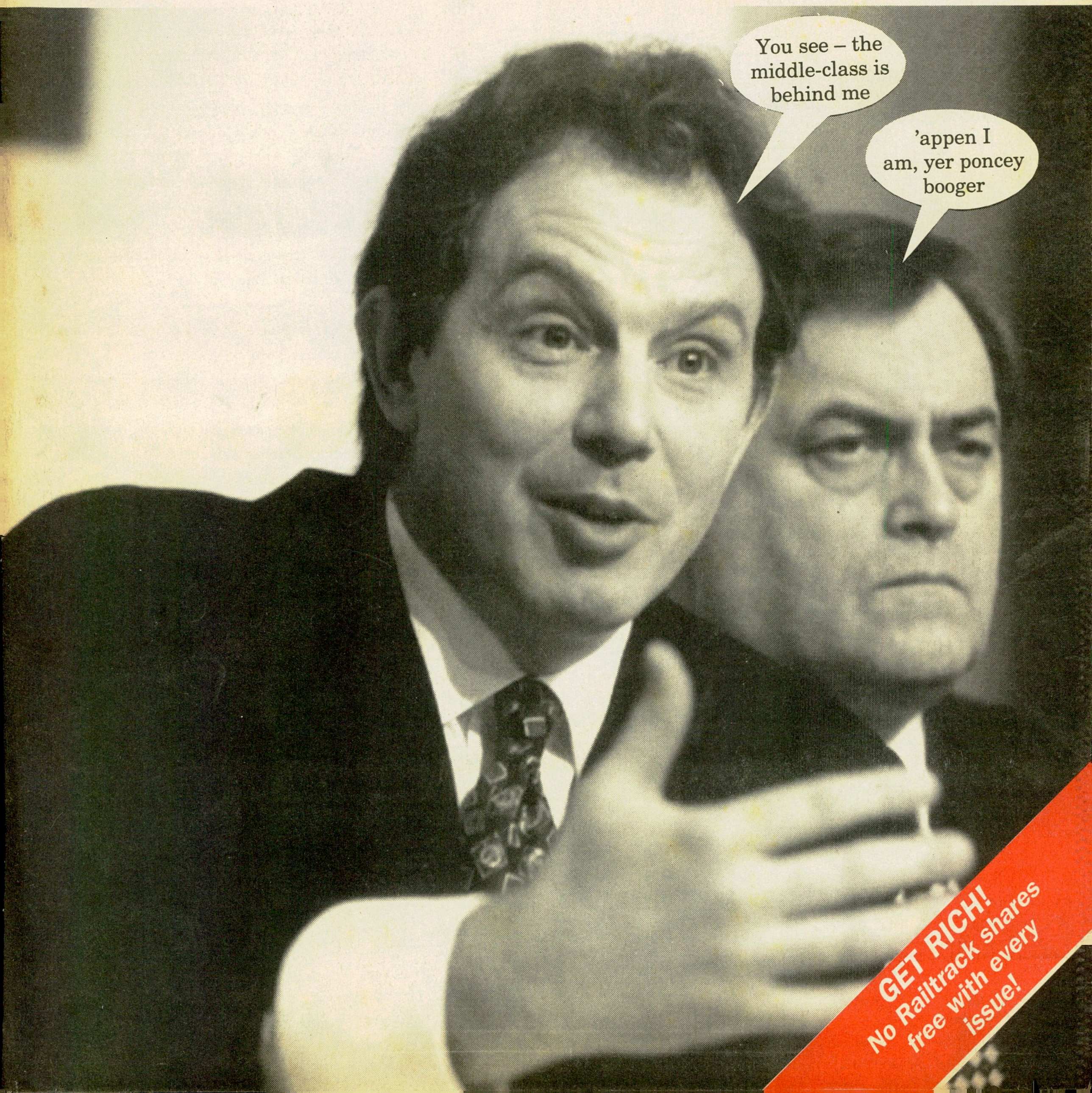

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"I don't really fill my mind much with what one set of foreigners is doing to another."

Alan Clark, ex-Defence Minister.

Successive British Governments have continued to permit sales of equipment used for torture to countries with appalling human rights records. The Scott Report touched just one tiny area of a huge worldwide trade in instruments of pain and death. Two recent Dispatches documentaries 'The Torture Trail' and 'Back On The Torture Trail' have shown that our Government is still turning a blind eye to this vile trade, if not actively encouraging it.

Amnesty International exists to expose and oppose human rights abuse wherever it occurs. We are not party political. What we do insist on is that Governments should respect and fulfil their international commitments to protect human rights, and that the law - which they have sworn to uphold - should apply fairly and freely both to their citizens and themselves.

While the allies went to war over Kuwait, a man called Mohammed was tortured by Saudi secret police, who suspected him of spying for Saddam.

"For many hours they tortured me. Being hit with an electronic baton not only made me vomit, but I lost control of my bowels, my water. I was left in my own vomit and urine all night."

Mohammed was not a spy. He was innocent and was later released. Even if he had been a spy, torturing him was illegal under international law.

Not that the torturers care much about international law. During the Gulf War, both sides used torture. Iraq had at least 30 different methods, including beating, burning, gouging out the eyes of victims, and torturing children as young five years old in front of their parents.

The Saudis and Syrians were hardly less ingenious. Their repertoire included anal rape, hosing with icy water, electric shocks to the genitals and threatening to sexually abuse prisoners' families. But the politicians who condemned Iraq were silent about allied tortures.

The world's policitians had a lot to be silent about. In March 1988, world opinion was outraged when 5,000 people died after Iraqi jets attacked the Kurdish town of Halabja with chemicals. In April, after a similar attack on a village, some men found a small boy and girl clinging to one another. While running away through a wheat field they had been attacked by an Iraqi helicopter and got separated from their parents. The parents had died but the children did not know this. They kept saying that when it grew light they would go and look for them. They thought it was night. They did not realise that they were blind.

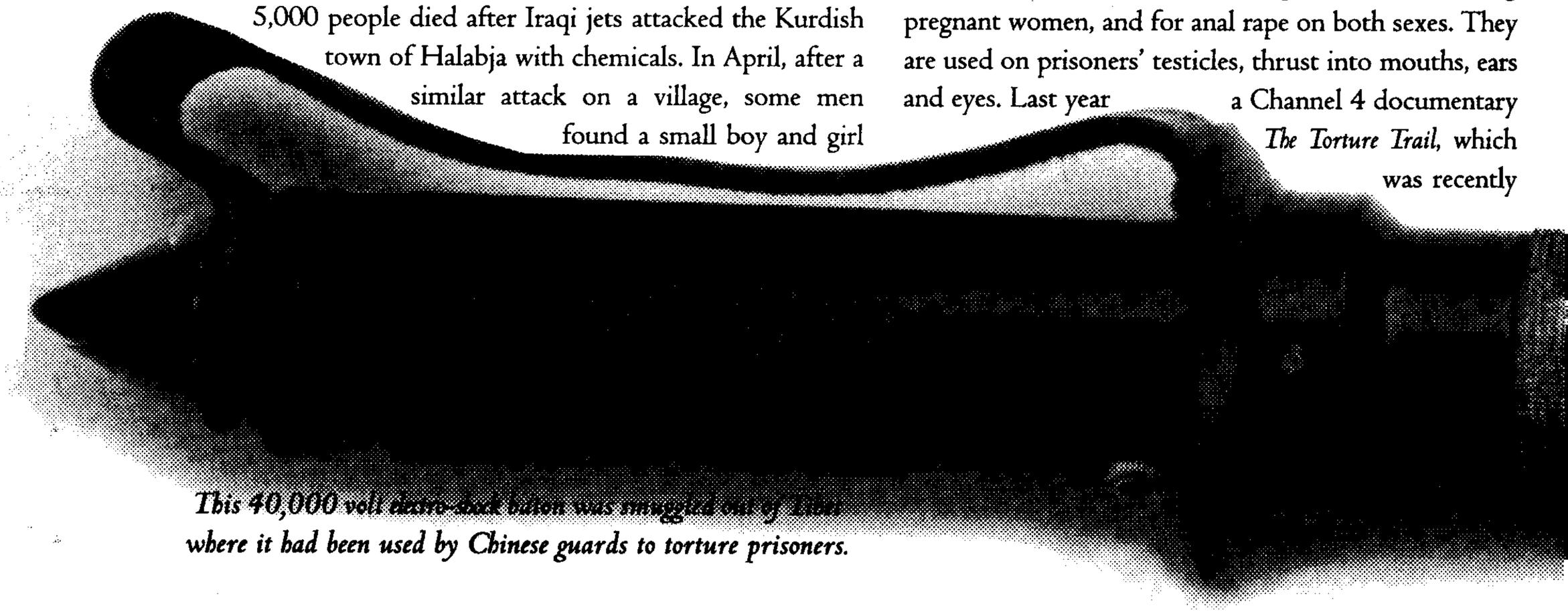
On April 12, less than a month after Halabja, at about the same time as those children were stumbling into their endless night, Junior Minister David Mellor was forecasting "a bright future in Iraq" for British industry. His fellow Ministers would soon adopt "a more flexible approach to arms sales to Iraq".

The Scott Inquiry heard how Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe was advised to keep this quiet because "It could look very cynical... so soon after expressing outrage about the treatment of the Kurds".

Once cynicism starts where does it stop? Today, the Government isn't keen to publicise the fact that it allows British firms to join in the international torture trade, a booming business worth millions a year to western companies whose catalogues offer products ranging from medieval style thumb-cuffs and leg-irons to sophisticated electro-shock equipment.

The torturer's favourite tool is the electro-shock baton, which give shocks of up to 150,000 volts, causing violent pain yet leaving hardly a mark. No wonder they are called 'the universal tool of the modern torturer'.

Electric batons are used to rape women, including pregnant women, and for anal rape on both sexes. They are used on prisoners' testicles, thrust into mouths, ears and eyes. Last year a Channel 4 documentary *The Torture Trail*, which was recently



This 40,000 volt electro-shock baton was smuggled out of Tibet where it had been used by Chinese guards to torture prisoners.

re-screened, proved that British companies were offering electro-shock batons for sale. A Glasgow firm claimed to have made such weapons and said the Government had sponsored a sales trip to sell its horrible wares in China.

China? But after pro-democracy supporters were massacred in Tiananmen Square, hadn't Sir Geoffrey Howe announced in the House of Commons: "I'm sure that all members of the House will share the worldwide sense of horror and join in the international condemnation of the slaughter of innocent people. Her Majesty's Government has therefore decided on the following action: all arms sales to China have been banned."

The Glasgow firm said the Government sponsored its sales trip *less than a year after* the Tiananmen slaughter.

"The Chinese bought electro-shock weapons from a UK company," says Amnesty International's Secretary General Pierre Sané. "And now they make them and export them throughout the world."

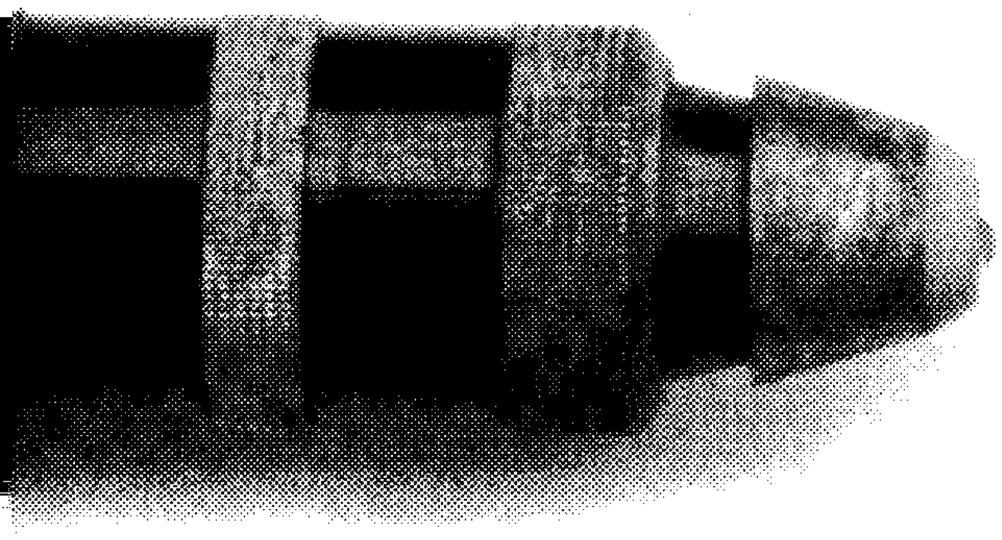
On March 13 Amnesty launched a campaign against human rights abuse in China, where electro-shock torture is today so widespread that it is almost impossible to document the number of victims. In Liaoning, four girls under 16 were tortured with electric batons to make them confess to 'promiscuous behaviour'. Tibetan monk Palden Gyatso was tortured with the baton pictured below. After they shoved it down his throat and triggered it, he woke in a pool of blood having lost 20 teeth.

Want to stop this trade? You could try writing to the Government. After *The Torture Trail* went out, hundreds of people did. They'd watched British businessmen waving electro-shock batons, yet they got back replies claiming that the programme makers had told lies.

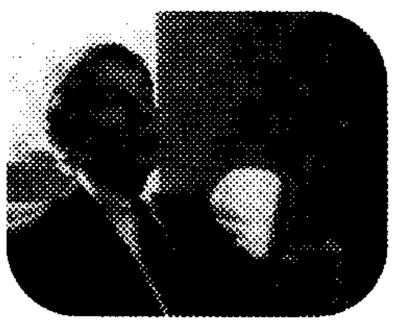
Many of these people were Amnesty members. *Torture Trail* reporter Martyn Gregory says: "When Amnesty members got the Government's letters they sent them to Amnesty and Amnesty forwarded them to me."

Martyn sued the Government for libel and won. Michael Heseltine apologised in the High Court and the Government paid £55,000 damages. MPs' questions forced the Government to admit that in 1993 it had issued a trans-shipment licence for electro-shock equipment.

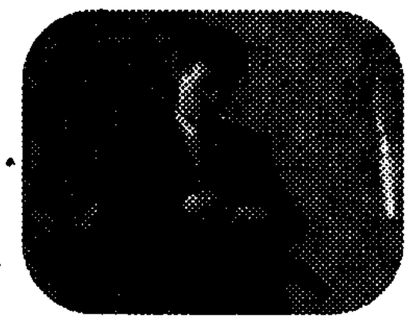
A year after the first programme, Dispatches went *Back on the Torture Trail.* It's business as usual. Five British companies offered to supply electro-shock batons. The shameful fact is that *it's legal to sell them*, provided the shipment never touches British soil. The Government, while turning a blind eye to this legal loophole, has part-funded a document, which is currently still available, to advise British firms on 'market opportunities' in the Gulf. One page unambiguously provides the market intelligence that "Qatar: Special Forces are interested in electric batons."



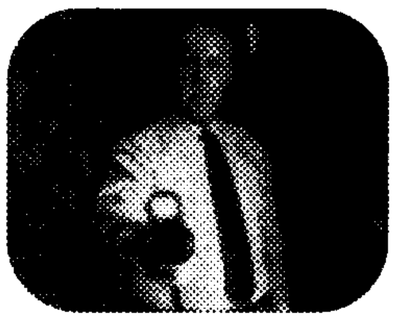
From Channel 4's Dispatches documentary 'The Torture Trail':



Businessman Gerry Hall showed the Dispatches team an electro-shock baton the voltage of which he said could be boosted to give n 120,000 volt shock.



Royal Ordnance sales manager Philip Morris caught on camera. He let slip that British Aerospace had supplied 8,000 electro-shock batons to Saudi Arabia.



Glasgow businessman Frank Stott claimed his company had made electro-shock batons and also that the Government had funded a sales trip to China.

Suppose you knew that a man had a history of violent knife attacks. If he offered you £10 for your carving knife would you sell it to him? What is the difference between this and what companies do when they sell torture equipment (and Ministers don't stop the sales) to people whom *they know* will use them to kill and maim?

How do they know? Because year after year, Amnesty brings them the evidence. Year after year, they ignore it.

They saw pictures of women and children gassed to death at Halabja, then struck new deals with the murderers.

They watched film of Indonesian troops gunning down civilians in East Timor, then invited their commanders to the UK to buy a whole new batch of armaments.

They watched a man stand in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square and then sent electro-shock batons to help the people who'd just massacred his friends.

Alan Clark doesn't fill his mind with what one bunch of foreigners does to another. Nor, to be frank, do most of us. If we opened ourselves to all the horrors of the world, we would go mad. Sadly, shutting out horror doesn't get rid of it. But there is one small thing you can do which will genuinely help rid the world of torture. Join Amnesty International and strengthen us with your voice and your support. Help us force a proper inquiry into Britain's involvement in the torture trade. Help us force Ministers to answer why they still allow British companies to trade this equipment.

Help us flush out the dealers and their friends. If the trade is legal, let's have it out in the open. If legal loopholes permit the trade to continue, help us to slam them shut. Above all, help us bring home to our politicians that we don't like what they're doing in our name, with our money. Please fill in the coupon and join us, or make a donation. Thousands of people in prison around the world, waiting in fear for the call to the torture chamber, would ask you, if they could, to fill in the coupon. Their families would ask you.

We are asking you to fill your mind with their pain and to become their hope. Pick up your pen, do it now.

I wish to be a member of Amnesty International. I enclose £21 Individual ☐ £27 Family ☐
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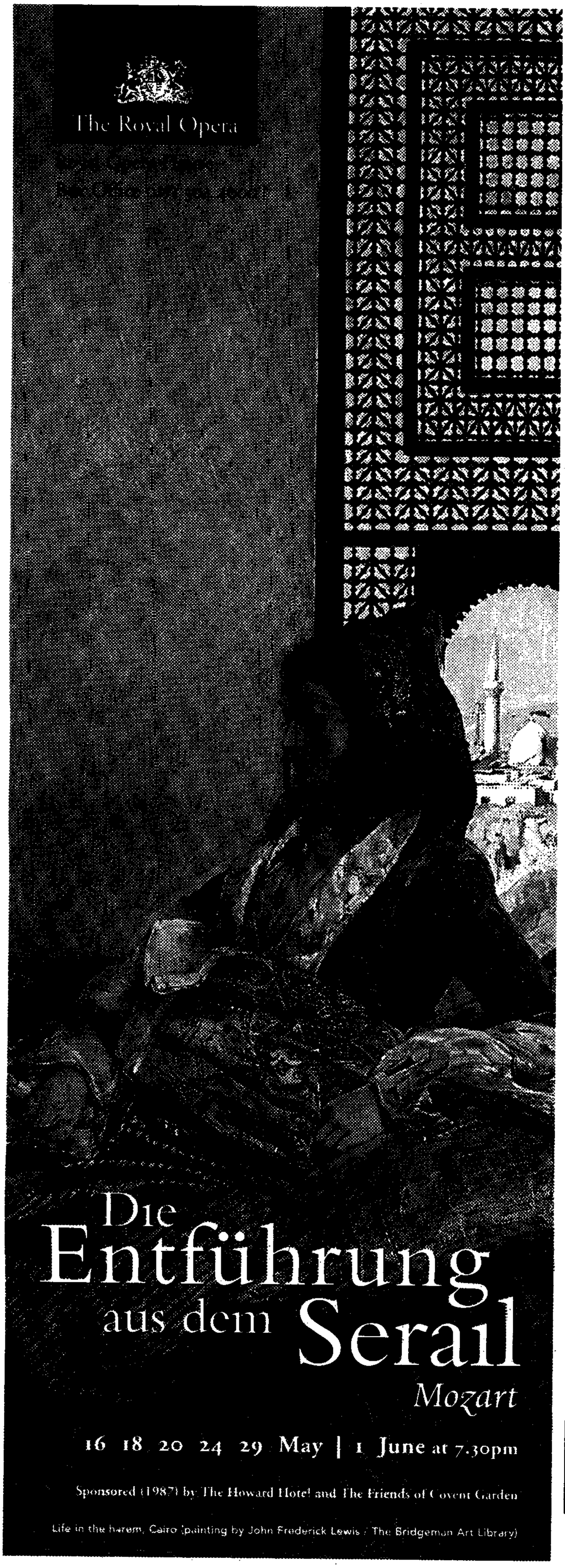
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

E4

The Royal Opera



Die
Entführung
aus dem Serail
Mozart

16 18 20 24 29 May | 1 June at 7.30pm

Sponsored (1987) by The Howard Hotel and The Friends of Covent Garden

Life in the harem, Cairo (painting by John Frederick Lewis / The Bridgeman Art Library)

mark thomas
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May 2 **Spalding** South Holland Centre, 8.00pm 01775 725031

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May 9 **Newtown** Theatr Hafren, 7.45pm 01686 625007

May 10 **Sheffield** Memorial Hall, 8.00 0114 273 5295/6

May 12 **Northampton** Roadmender, 8.30pm 01604 604222

May 13 **Southampton** Nuffield Theatre, 8.00pm 01703 671771

May 16 **St. Albans** The Arena, 8.00pm 01727 866466

May 17 **Leeds** City Varieties Music Hall, 8.00pm 0113 243 0808

May 19 **Belfast** The Arts , 8.00pm 01232 324936

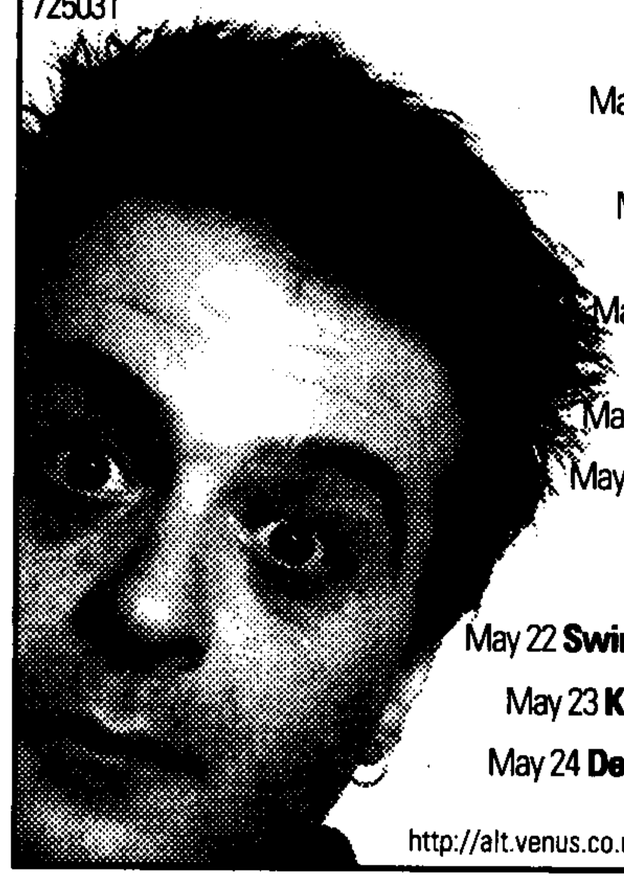
May 20 **Chester** Gateway Theatre, 8.00pm 01244 34039

May 22 **Swindon** Wyvern Theatre, 8.00pm 01793 524481

May 23 **King's Lynn** Arts Centre 8.00pm 01553 773578

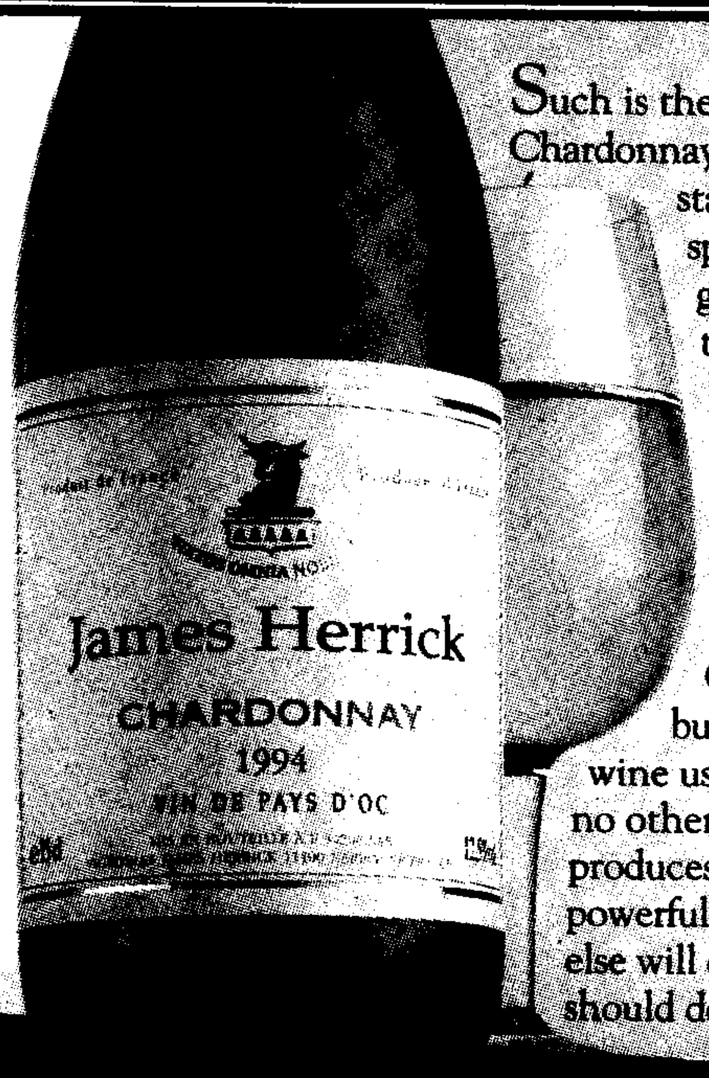
May 24 **Derby** Assembly Rooms, 8.00pm 01332 255800

to be continued...



http://alt.venus.co.uk/MarkThomas/

If Chardonnay is all you make, you get it right. Or else.



Such is the competition among Chardonnays, you need *dedication* to stand out. James Herrick spent 22 years studying the grape, from Champagne to the Barossa. Then he brought back the technical skills learned in the New World and blended them with Old World *savoir-faire* in the South of France. He planted Chardonnay and nothing but. He makes his own wine using his own grapes, and no other. And each vintage he produces a classic: elegant, powerful, long-finishing. Nothing else will do for him. Nothing less should do for you.

James Herrick
CHARDONNAY

AVAILABLE COUNTRYWIDE FROM BERKELEY WINE, COCKBURNS OF LEITH, DAVISONS, E.H. BOOTH, ELDRIDGE POPE, EUROPA, FULLER'S, HALL BATSON,ODDBINS, RUSSELL CELLARS, SAINSBURY'S, SOMERFIELD, SPAR, THOS. PEATLING, UNWINS, VICTORIA WINE, WINE CELLAR.

Gnome

THE QUESTION of political bias in newspapers will not go away. Fortunately the Daily Gnome can hold its head up high over its record of disinterested coverage of current affairs.

This week, for example, there were two major stories, one reflecting badly on the Conservative Party and the other reflecting badly on the Labour Party.

Yet the Daily Gnome ran *both* of these stories without showing fear or favour and gave them *equal* prominence.

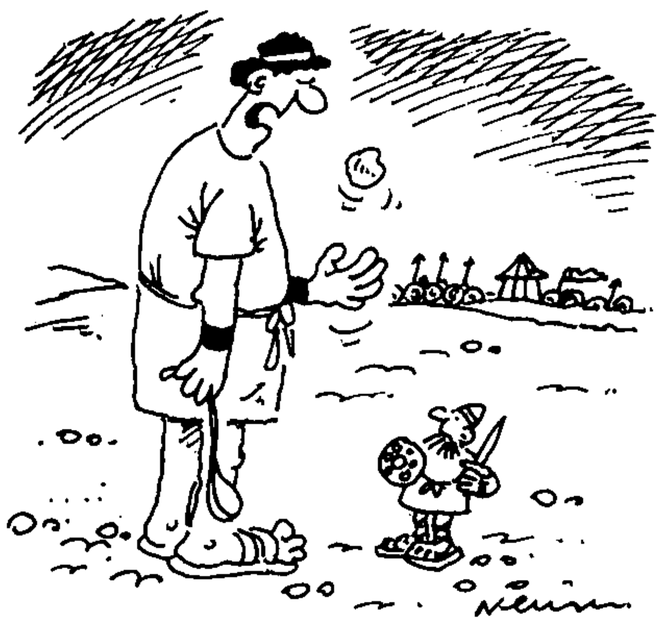
When the Tories lost the by-election at Staffordshire South-East, the Daily Gnome ran a small piece on page 27 under the headline TYPICAL MID-TERM RESULT LEAVES MAJOR UNWORRIED.

And when Clare Short suggested on Breakfast TV that those earning £35,000 or so a year should perhaps pay a little more tax, how did the Daily Gnome react?

It buried the story on the front page under the bland headline 'WE'LL STEAL ALL YOUR INCOME' PROMISES RED CLARE AS SHE BRANDS TONY BLAIR A LIAR.

I hardly think I need to argue the point further.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
Gnome House
Panicking-over-Tax
Berks.



"I'm afraid the Middle East situation's changed a bit, Goliath"

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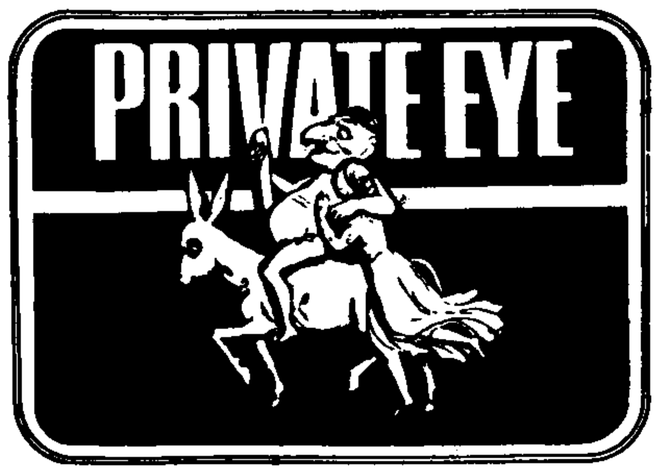

COLOUR SECTION

THE strong rumour that Doris Karloff — aka Ann Widdecombe, hardline junior home office minister in charge of prisons — will be elevated to the cabinet is no cause for rejoicing at Holloway women's jail.

Despite the furore that erupted after Widdecombe defended the shackling of female prisoners during labour, inhumane practices persist. Recently — and despite protests from the chaplain of Holloway, Jill Holden — prison officers there shackled a woman prisoner during the funeral service for her two-week-old baby.

Staff at Great Ormond Street children's hospital, who had looked after the baby girl during her short life, have written to the prison governors to complain about treatment of the distressed mother. A routine "full investigation" has been ordered by prison boss Richard Tilt. So expect no change...

ONE result of the armed escape from Brixton jail in 1991 of two IRA terrorist suspects was the introduction of an X-ray machine at the visitor's gate to detect firearms.

Strange to learn, then, that with the end of the IRA ceasefire the machine has actually been switched off for the last four months. The governor, Dr Andrew Coyle, pulled the plug after complaints that staff operating it had still not been trained four years after its installation, and amid fears that it posed a health risk to prison officers.

Prison bosses claim to have installed other "secret" measures to make up for the loss of the machine, but a recent survey suggests controls are somewhat lacking: more than one in five Brixton inmates tested positive for drugs.

THE £10 million investment by local authorities in two new rail services in South Wales is threatened by a blatant, post-privatisation conflict of interest.

While construction of the final station is not even finished yet, the franchising director has already decided the two new services are not worth safeguarding. The eventual private operator will need to run trains only every two hours on the new routes from Bridgend to Swansea and Bridgend to Maesteg.

Such infrequency could wreck patronage of both routes to the point where closure is feasible as people defect to cars — or to the frequent bus services run by South Wales Transport and Brewers Motors. Still, the franchising director's decision will please potential franchise holder FirstBus. It already owns a quarter of Great Western Trains — and also happens to own South Wales Transport and Brewers Motors.

OFWAT, the water regulator, is making truly feeble efforts to improve competition in the industry.

Its latest attempt involved delaying the report of its investigation into drought-ridden **Yorkshire Water** for another month at least. Nice to see that Ofwat's chairman, Ian Byatt, is earning his extended four-year tenure in the job. Not to mention his huge 17 percent salary rise — enough to make even a fatcat water boss envious.

The public inquiry into Yorkshire Water's woeful performance ended with the company's solicitor John Holroyd claiming that Yorkshire Water deserved "considerable credit" for delivering any water at all during last year's drought. But the biggest joke of the inquiry was the company's suggestion that people should save water by taking showers instead of baths. Nobody was laughing in the Middleton area of Leeds, where water pressure is so low that showers are only possible in the middle of the night. Residents complain that at "peak" times it takes almost an hour to run a bath.

Over at new Welsh utility **Hyder** bosses have shown amazing powers of foresight by cashing in their share options on Friday 29 March. The following Monday the government declared its intention to introduce more competition into the sector — an announcement which caused a sudden fall in the value of the stock.

Chief executive Graham Hawker and Brian Charles, managing director of the **Dwr Cymru** subsidiary, had luckily sold a significant tranche of their stock interests, earning themselves a tidy profit of £250,000.

Meanwhile Hyder, which is Welsh for confidence, is trying to make savings of £75 million through rationalisation, the first step being 500 job losses.

Droughts continue across the country, particularly in **North Wales** and **Yorkshire**, long before the expected dry summer. **Southern Water, Mid Kent Water** and the **Folkestone & Dover Water Company** all have hose pipe and sprinkler bans. The companies want to coordinate their supply so that areas of surplus can be piped to areas of drought. But typically the firms' managements cannot agree how this exchange should be priced.

They have also looked at a more novel solution. They want to use service pipes to transport water through the Channel Tunnel from France. This way France, with its supposedly hugely inefficient municipal water companies can keep Britain, with its supposedly hugely brilliant private water companies, in supply.

The water companies have actually taken one positive step. Homes in the south-east are being asked to catch and store their own rainwater from roof guttering downpipes. Anyone who wants to do so can get a bucket from their local water company. They cost £2.50 each and come complete with water company logo.

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THE HANRATTY AFFAIR

SCOTLAND Yard is rather embarrassed by the allegation in the *News of the World* that one of its top detectives, Det Supt Roger Matthews, has told colleagues that James Hanratty was innocent of the A6 murder for which he was hanged in 1962.

A spokesman told the *Eye*: "We are not prepared to discuss alleged comments made by one officer to another about a continuing inquiry." He could confirm, however, that for at least a year DS Matthews had been in charge of the Scotland Yard investigation into the Hanratty case, which was set up at the start of 1995 after a 400-page submission of new evidence was sent to the home secretary by Hanratty's solicitor, Geoffrey Bindman.

The home office handed the submission to Scotland Yard, which set up an inquiry under DS Matthews. It has been "overseen" by Commander Bob Ramm. A high level meeting has already been held about the Hanratty case between the home office miscarriages of justice department (C3) and the police. Another meeting was to follow soon afterwards to discuss whether the home secretary should refer the A6 case to the court of appeal. Instead, there seems to have been some delay. DS Matthews has been moved to another department. The Scotland Yard spokesman told the *Eye* that he is "off sick".

On 22 March, Mike Sullivan, chief crime reporter of the *Sun*, phoned Geoffrey Bindman to say he had heard a rumour that Matthews's inquiry had concluded in favour of Hanratty. Sullivan's source was not firm enough for the *Sun* to risk publication. Three weeks later, the *News of the World* was satisfied enough with its source to publish the story and follow it up with an angry first leader, declaring that "Scotland Yard had uncovered a disgraceful package of discrepancies, fabricated evidence and suppressed facts which have led them to conclude there was a grave miscarriage of justice".

It seems unlikely that even the *News of the World* would commit itself so completely to an entirely false story. The leak of DS Matthews's views, almost certainly not directly by him but by someone to whom he spoke, may well arise from a difference of opinion between him and his commander about what the police should recommend.

Joan Lestor MP, who first raised the A6 case when she was MP for Eton and Slough 30 years ago, tells the *Eye* she will be writing immediately to the home secretary to ask why such important news should be passed on to parliament and public by way of dubious leaks to the *News of the World*.

DAILY EXPRESS

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: THE DAILY EXPRESS

Brian Bridgewater attacked last night's BBC Rough Justice *programme for opening up old wounds and taking a one-sided look at the case.*

— Daily Express, *11 April, page 1*

Mr Bridgewater, an engineer, and his wife Janet, of Wordsley, West Midlands, did not watch the Rough Justice *programme.*

— Daily Express, *11 April, page 5*

Many viewers will be asking the same question that tortures Carl's family: What is it that attracts these crusaders? It can hardly be a burning desire to rectify a miscarriage of justice, since outside their willing and fevered imaginations no such injustice is evident.

— Daily Express *leader, 11 April, page 8*

I remember reviewing it [a previous programme about the Bridgewater case] *in a high state of barricade-storming indignation, convinced that no one could possibly fail to harbour serious doubts about a major miscarriage of justice.*

— Maureen Paton, writing in the Daily Express *11 April, page 38*

Street Of Shame

NOT content with turning an entire issue of the *Daily Mirror* into a shameless "advertorial" for Pepsi-Cola, the bosses of Mirror Group Newspapers have been trying to force the *Independent* to plug the sickly drink as well.

They were therefore furious when the *Indie on Sunday* had the temerity to point out that Pepsi's share of the British market was being threatened by Virgin Cola and supermarkets' own brands.

Roger Eastoe, MGN's deputy managing director, fired off a peremptory memo to *Sindie* editor Peter Wilby: "Given the company's close relationship with Pepsi, they have asked me if we could correct the inaccuracies in this week's paper. I would be grateful if you could do this and it is an interesting media marketing story which will be highly relevant for the *Independent* Business Section. If you would like any more details, please contact me or Nick Wiszowaty at Freud Communications [the Pepsi PR firm]..."

Wilby, who guards his editorial independence tenaciously, decided he would not like any more details. Although he printed a tiny item correcting a statistical error in the original story, he valiantly refused to take up the heavy hint that he should run a puff piece about the joys of new, blue Pepsi-Cola.

Can such rank insubordination be tolerated? Watch this space.

THE descent of the once-readable *Daily Mirror* into *Sun*-style inanity is now complete with the daily puffing of its cable TV cousin, L!VE TV.

Where the *Sun* and other Murdoch titles blazed the trail with blatant in-house plugs for Sky in "news" stories, the Mirror Group under David Montgomery has followed suit.

"TV ecstasy death drama", ran the headline over a short piece about *Canary Wharf*, the L!VE TV soap no one in Britain has ever heard of and even fewer people watch. And "Watch out for a cold front, girls," sang the piece announcing that: "TV weather forecasts are getting a sexy new look with girl forecasters in bikinis and low-cut evening gowns."

THE Scottish *Daily Record* is no better.It can hardly contain its excitement about L!ve TV: on at least three separate days recently it has carried a "four-page special on Britain's most happening TV channel" — which, like the *Record* itself, just happens to be owned by Mirror Group Newspapers.

Readers of the *Record* may find it hard to share the paper's conviction that "Britain's brightest channel is dedicated to entertainment, excitement and excellence."

ALL change at the *Observer*, where sacked editor Andrew Jaspan was swiftly followed out of the door by his Praetorian Guard, all pursued by fat redundancy cheques.

Jaspan's recruits from north of the border — Kenneth Roy, Gail Counsell, Nigel Billen, Ian McWhirter — were all ejected, as well as southern recruits such as Sarah Baxter and Andrew Hogg, together with executives closely associated with the old regime such as Adrian Hamilton and deputy editor John Price.

Indeed, in his first week as editor, Jaspan's replacement Will Hutton ran up redundancy bills of almost £1 million. Veteran columnist Hamilton got £210,000, while £60,000 was paid to production chief Billen, who only arrived at the paper last summer. However, Hutton did fire Jaspan's "star" signing, columnist Janet Street-Porter, thereby saving an estimated £60,000 a year.

Victim Hogg had come from the *Sunday Times* to be Jaspan's news editor. Since leaving the *Obs* he has been exposed as a Beria to Jaspan's Stalin. Unbeknown to hacks, he would write secret police-style weekly bulletins to Jaspan critically evaluating their performances and playing down his own shortcomings. These documents, nicknamed "the Hogg File", are now with the *Observer*'s new executive editor, Alan Rusbridger.

One executive who miraculously avoided being purged involuntarily was Michael Pilgrim, editor of the Life section, known around the office as "Death". But he had to go anyway. His fate was sealed after he stormed into the new editor's office and hurled abuse at him. Pilgrim thus volunteered to walk the plank in return for a £64,000 pay-off.

On the day of his leaving party in the Coach and Horses off Farringdon Road, the *Guardian* and *Observer* management separately put £1,000 behind the bar in the evening, which soon ran out and cost the company £2,500 in all. A tired and emotional Pilgrim, who had been carousing since lunch, prodded Rusbridger and Hutton and told them: "I'm the best fucking editor on this paper and you couldn't fucking recognise it."

The unlamented Jaspan meanwhile has returned to Scotland where he is oiling up to the Barclay brothers, owners of the *Scotsman* and *Scotland on Sunday*, papers he edited before the Barclays bought them. No doubt his willingness several months ago to cave in over a libel writ from the twins and apologise for a story about their tax avoidance measures written by *Observer* hack John Sweeney will stand him in good stead.

So what of Hutton, the latest man to be hailed as saviour of the *Observer*? As he told the *Evening Standard*: "The paper needs all sorts of attention in various areas." What a shame the former stockbroker turned hack wasn't able to give quite the right sort of "attention" to the Zurich-based European Business Channel over which he presided as editor-in-chief. The satellite TV station collapsed under a pile of debts in 1991, a year after launch. This kind of financial wizardry is clearly just what the ailing *Observer* needs.

"I never want to grow up Wendy. I just want to drink beer, watch football and read 'Loaded' magazine."

"HOW much did the *People* pay for the 'cellulite' pic of Diana?" the *Guardian* asked on Monday. "It was £15,000, an unusually highly placed source discloses..." Who is this source? Step forward Princess Di herself, who enjoyed an "off the record" lunch at the *Grauniad* office last Thursday.

The *Grauniad* has for some time been trying to summon the courage to come out as a republican newspaper, and earlier this year editor Alan Rusbridger commissioned one of his eager young hacks, Edward Pilkington, to prepare an in-depth *exposé* of the royals. But all that was forgotten as the paper's middleaged male executives swooned and simpered at HRH over the lunch-table. "She's so lovely," one cooed, "and so *nice*."

PRINCESS Diana has a rival in her affections for *Daily Mail* royal correspondent Richard Kay.

The rival is another blonde, Tina Weaver, who almost certainly never works out as she is far too busy as features editor of the *Daily Mirror*.

At the recent *UK Press Gazette* awards dinner, Kay cavorted on the dance floor snogging Weaver in full view of other hacks. Afterwards they both repaired to Brown's nightclub where Kay conducted extensive searches for cellulite on Weaver's body.

THE *Evening Standard* **has been teasing readers with references to** *Kitchen Venom*, **the soon-to-be-published rent boy and division bell novel by former Commons clerk Philip Hensher.**

Strangely, just one of *Kitchen Venom*'s fictional MPs wasn't mentioned in the *Standard*. He is (see page 241 of the novel) "ridiculed by every clerk" because of his "complete lack of friends and allies" and his "poor personal hygiene". And the name of the character who was omitted? Why Halitosis Hastings!

One "book" with which the rag's editor, Max "Hitler" Hastings has been associated, however, is the paper's own recently published *Action Guide to a New Job*, a brochure for school-leavers with a foreword by Hitler. "For a job-seeker," he writes, spotting a vacancy is only the beginning. It is another day's work to land the job."

Standard hacks want the company to issue a companion volume, *The Action Guide to Losing Your Old Job*, in which Hitler could also write the preface. Since taking charge earlier this year, he has sacked no fewer than 35 of his staff.

MAGAZINE publishers generally promote their wares around the time supplies are delivered to newsagents. But in a pioneering spirit, those behind the exciting *Dempsters* **magazine (which is far too grand to bother with apostrophes) have decided to repromote their glossy organ six weeks after it first appeared on the shelves. Hence the advert in last Wednesday's** *Daily Mail* **announcing that the first issue of** *Dumpsters* **is "on sale today".**

This is a particularly bold move as the cover story on Emma Thompson's chances of winning an Oscar is now slightly out of date and the "exclusive" feature on the Duchess of York has been overtaken by yet more well-publicised gaffes.

According to news trade sources, sales of the first issue have been so disappointing that to even contemplate producing a second is downright bizarre.

SIGNAL FAILURES

IN THE new money-driven rail system, franchisees won't need valid reasons — like leaves on the line or a shortage of drivers — to cancel services at the drop of a hat.

Any services not specified in the passenger service requirements can be abandoned at just seven days' notice if a company feels insufficient people will use them to guarantee a profit. The new operator of the London Victoria to Dartford service, for instance, will be obliged to run only 25 percent of the current service (the peak-period trains) but may continue the other 75 percent for PR reasons. The entire off-peak service on that line could then be cancelled or withdrawn with minimal warning.

This freedom should appeal to the bus companies which are taking a front seat in the franchising process. Most bus companies don't bother making their timetables widely available and the timetables they do publish rarely commit them to running the advertised service until a declared date. They prefer to use the bewildering phrase "until further notice".

SIX months after British Rail's rolling stock was privatised there is still no sign of new trains to rectify the problems in West Yorkshire (see *Eye* **891).**

The prospect of privatisation frightened off investors who planned to fund new trains for the newly electrified lines between Leeds, Skipton, Bradford and Ilkley, and the government assured everyone that privatisation would break the log-jam which has caused hundreds of redundancies in train factories. Some of the hand-me-down trains used instead are unfit to operate so the service between Bradford Forster Square and Leeds has been scrapped and train frequencies on other routes halved.

Perhaps local Tory MPs Gary Waller and Sir Marcus Fox could point out the advantages of privatisation to irate passengers and the local passenger transport executive, which funded the electrification only to find the planned traffic development hacked to bits from the start.

'Dr B. Ching'

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! "NOW middle are we all class," says the tongue-tied but cuddly John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader! How times change, muses the Marquesa, recalling a touching Labour party conference contretemps in the corridors of the Imperial Hotel, Blackpool, between George Brown and Marcia Williams, now Lady Falkender.

Late one evening the alcoholically-challenged Brown turned to his comrade and complimented her loudly in customary old Labour fashion: "Marcia, you're just a middle class slag!"

"Don't you dare," shrieked la Forkbender in retort, "call me middle class!"

QUOTE OF THE WEEK 1

SELINA SCOTT, star of Sky TV and blonde Princess of Wales lookalike, was asked if she had seen her admirer Clive James recently: "No" she replied frostily."He's seeing a lot of Diana." Ooh! Er! Hell hath no fury...

HALLO! THERE is a disgraceful omission from the latest Sunday Times list of billionaires. My friend Mohamed Fayed, the owner of Paunch magazine, has been left out! But surely Harrods alone is worth more than a billion pounds? Can it be that those misguided wealth-counters feel that he does not in some way own the shop? Or that his bank borrowings make his net worth somewhat problematic to estimate? Appalling!

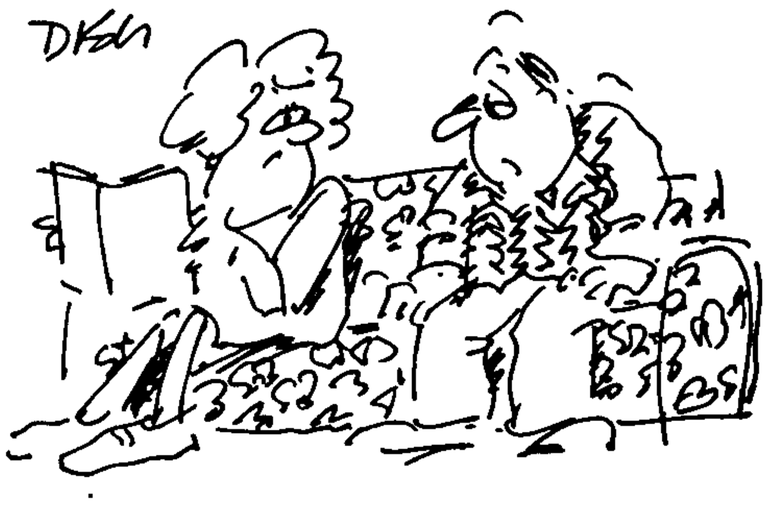
HALLO! CONGRATULATIONS to dear Peter Mandelson, Labour's so-called spin doctor: he has managed to get that poisonous, pen-pusher Chrissie Iley to write something nice about him in the *Sunday Times*.

Iley commented on the pet name given to Peter by supporters in his Hartlepool constituency: "Bobby". This, she confided, was because of Peter's similarity to the charismatic American politician, Robert Kennedy.

Er, no it isn't; and her comments caused guffaws in the north east where party hacks know only too well the derivation of the political manipulator's nickname. Apparently he is called Bobby after a traditional English song called *Bobby Shaftoe*. **Whatever can they mean?**

QUOTE OF THE WEEK 2

TONY BANKS MP, asked if he had read Peter Mandelson's book: "Good God, no. I reviewed it."

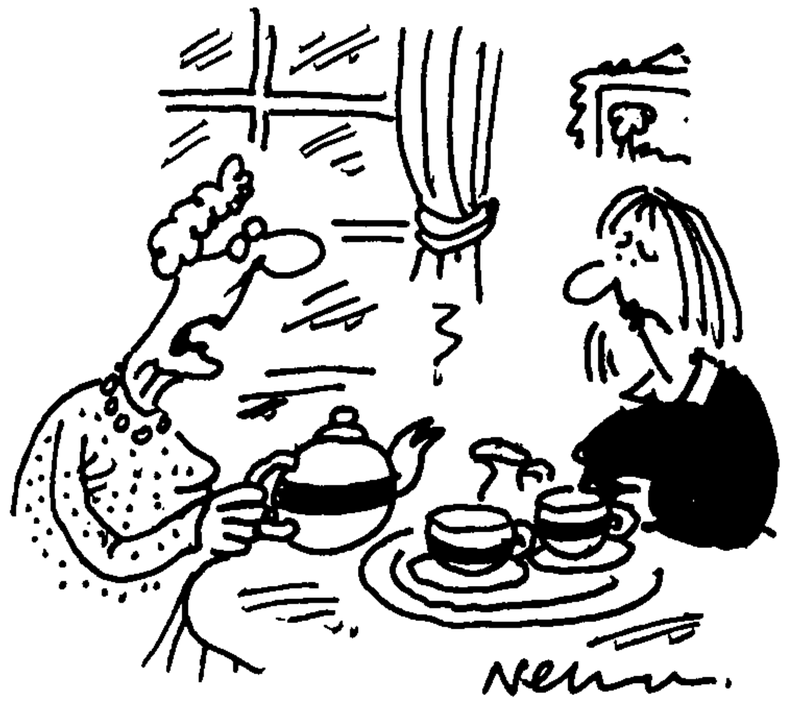


"Kids have finished college... I'll be off now then"

HALLO! *CUPID's arrow must at times be aided, and with this in mind a friend in Oxfordshire wrote to Sirius, a Cheshire-based dating agency which promises to make those difficult introductions easy.*

My lovelorn male chum and his female housemate both applied to the agency, in fact, and both received terribly enthusiastic replies. Indeed, he was delighted to read that "at the moment we are in the slightly unusual situation of having rather more women than men in Oxfordshire and the surrounding areas".

He was less delighted, though, to examine his female pal's reply from Sirius. She was informed by the matchmakers that "at the moment we are in the slightly unusual situation of having rather more men than women in Oxfordshire and the surrounding areas". What an unbelievable coincidence!



"Shall I be surrogate mother?"

HALLO! WE were very sad to hear of the tantrum thrown by Labour's Roy Hattersley on Laurie Taylor's radio show, *Afternoon Shift*.

Hattersley was part of a discussion of childhood memories which did *not* include direct reference to his book and the chance to plug it. Afterwards Fattersley went mental saying that he had "never been treated so badly in his life" and shouted at Taylor and his researchers. His wife then had to apologize to everyone for his conduct. It's not just his dog that needs muzzling.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK 3

OVERHEARD as the audience came out of the London concert given by film-maker Woody Allen, the sometime jazz clarinettist: "First time he's made me laugh."

O·B·N·K

I wanted to tell him that 'Champagne Supernova' is one of the five greatest songs ever written. But I couldn't bring myself to, it would have felt strangely out of place, so instead, as he's leaving I shake his hand, knowing that someday soon I'll be able to boast that this was the hand that shook the hand that wrote the album 'Morning Glory' that features the song 'Champagne Supernova'.

Seeing Oasis, I saw history in the making.

Meeting Oasis, I met history.

Supreme.

BEN STUD (interviewing Noel Gallagher)
Melody Maker

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

IN THE TEAROOM

THE House of Commons has its own gym where slack-paunched, saggy bottomed MPs grunt and sweat while vainly trying to achieve the muscular definition of dashing Captain Ashdown.

It's always a sorry sight, but not half so pathetic a spectacle as that of the Tory left flexing its political pectorals this past week, in the hope of intimidating the prime minister into going soft on Europe.

Had the left united behind Ken Clarke months ago, establishing him as the certain successor to John Major, their views might have prevailed in cabinet. But they allowed themselves to be shafted by the prime minister, who by adroitly anointing Chris Patten during his trip to Hong Kong, has divided the left as neatly as he has divided the right between Michael Portillo and John Redwood.

In the tearoom elaborate schemes are plotted to get Patten into the House before the leadership contest that will inevitably follow the party's defeat at the polls. Plans have even been made to canvass the newboy intake in advance of the election. They may not know it yet, but that job will fall to veteran *Pattenistas* Sean Woodward (who takes over Douglas Hurd's seat in Witney) and Damian Green, the next MP for Ashford.

'Urquhart'

"THIS is very serious," Lord Archer warned last Sunday, referring to the threat from Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party. How odd, then, that only a few hours earlier Archer had treated the whole business as a jolly jape, offering Goldsmith a bet that his party would lose its deposit wherever it stood.

And yet, for once in his life Archer may be right. Sir Jammy Fishpaste's party is indeed serious, in that it has £20 million of his dosh to finance its spoiling exercise. At the same time, however, it is entirely ludicrous.

For all Fishpaste's boasts that he is poaching "key" Conservatives, he has so far attracted only one political figure whose name rings even the faintest bell — Sir Alan Walters, Thatcher's former economic guru. (Or two if you count society hostess Carla Powell, wife of Thatcher's chum Sir Charles Powell; she has been excitedly telling friends that she will be "working behind the scenes for Jimmy".) As revealed in the last *Eye*, many of the other recruits seem to be superannuated Conservative students and accident-prone nincompoops, such as Patrick Robertson and Douglas "Dougie" Smith.

Goldsmith's initial demand was that the Tories should promise a Euro-referendum. John Major has now agreed to include this in his next election manifesto, but Sir Jammy is not prepared to fold up his tents. Instead he is now holding out for a Speaker's Conference to determine the "exact words" of the referendum question — a pretty arcane issue on which to run a £20 million election campaign. ("We Want A Speaker's Conference, And We Want It Now!")

At this rate, the Referendum Party may turn out to be the most expensive and absurd *folie de grandeur* since *Now!* magazine — which, as older readers may recall, was owned by a certain Sir J. Fishpaste.

ANOTHER brilliant decision of heritage secretary Virginia Bottomley was to hand SITA (GB) a £10 million contract to keep Britain's historic sites looking shipshape.

Unfortunately, Jean-Jacques Prompsey, the grandly titled president-directeur-general of SITA and board member of SITA (GB), is finding it hard to stay out of trouble at the moment (*Eyes passim*), despite having a suspended four-year prison sentence hanging over him.

Prompsey and five others have been arrested in France over alleged payments of £200,000 made to the Socialist Party during the time he served as commercial director of the giant water company, Lyonnaise des Eaux.

At least SITA (GB) has made it clear how seriously it takes the task of looking after sites such as Dover Castle and Stonehenge. It has cut the number of craftsmen employed by the restoration department by a third.

WILL Labour whip George Mudie, MP for Leeds East, defend his local Killingbeck hospital, which is threatened with closure? Er, no.

Initially campaigners in the constituency were surprised by his lack of sympathy. Normally Labour MPs are only too keen to make political capital out of NHS cuts (*'only too keen to save the NHS', shurely?*); but Mudie has told the Save the Hospital campaign: "The fight is lost... You can do nothing... You're wasting your time."

Interestingly campaigners have found documents which reveal that as far back as 1980 Leeds council was negotiating with the local health authority to "redevelop" the area by closing down the hospital and replacing it with houses (not that there is a shortage of sites elsewhere in the city), and by building a science park and wiping out much of the local green belt.

The council leader from 1980-89 was... George Mudie. Oh, and while he was leading the council he was also serving Killingbeck's health workers — as a full time NUPE official!

HARRIET HARMAN, MP for Peckham, was the only Labour member to miss a three-line whip on an opposition amendment to the finance bill that would have cut VAT on home insulation for the elderly from 17.5 percent to 8 percent. The government defeated the amendment by one vote.

Even those Harman has helped in the past are now turning against her. Witness the behaviour of Southwark councillor Ian Driver, who has jumped ship and joined Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party. Driver will stand against Harman at the general election, which is odd given that last autumn he sought — and won — her support for his failed bid to be chosen as prospective candidate for "new" Labour in Battersea.

EACH of the ballsachingly dull meetings held by Greater London Labour party last year to divvy up women-only shortlists among its winnable seats in the capital was heckled by the "chair" of the Battersea party, the dullard *Grauniad* journo Martin Linton.

Time and again he argued that Battersea, a key Labour target, should not be a women-only seat. Worn out "comrades" eventually surrendered, assuming that Linton was keeping the seat warm for some tired old Labour bore.

In a sense, he was: Battersea has now chosen its Labour candidate and it is *Mr* Martin Linton.

'Backbiter'

QUANGO NEWS

SCOTLAND's recently expanded and most longwinded quango — the Argyll, the Isles, Loch Lomond, Stirling and Trossachs Tourist Board — thought it a splendid idea to spend £2.7 million of taxpayers' money on turning Stirling's old town gaol into offices.

The empty, decaying prison was thus transformed under the Stirling Initiative, a partnership between councils, the Scottish office and the quango. Two years on, it is now ready to provide "high quality office space" as part of a drive to create a thriving new business area in Stirling old town.

Unfortunately the only thriving new business in Stirling appears to be, er, quango-ism: the tourism chiefs' existing offices are too small to cope with their expanded operation, so the quango has relocated itself into most of the old prison's swanky new offices before they even came on to the market.

ENERGY

THE people's champion — Graeme Odgers, chairman of the monopolies and mergers commission (MMC) — has spoken. He has decided that creating two new monopolies to generate and deliver electricity is not against the public interest and can go ahead.

Mr Odgers, appointed by Michael Heseltine on April fools' day 1993, has the public interest at heart. He was previously chief executive of Alfred Macalpine's; then managing director of British Telecom; and finally managing director of Tarmac, corporations all devoted to the wellbeing of the little man and woman.

His decision, leaked to *The Economist* and soon to be announced by the department of trade, means that National Power, which generates electricity, can merge with Southern Electric, the regional electricity company which delivers it to 2.6 million homes; and Powergen, another generator, can do the same with Midland Electric (2.2 million customers).

This means that 4.8 million families will be locked into buying electricity from their local REC, which has a monopoly of supply and will be part of a generating company which is supposed to be exposed to competition. It will be impossible to prevent cross-subsidisation and will signal the beginning of the end of the attempt to create a free market in electricity.

This will be an appalling blow for Professor Stephen Littlechild, director-general of OFFER, the office of electricity regulation, who has made it clear he is opposed to "vertical integration". If he had any political sense, he would decide that this is a good time to resign on an issue of principle and go back to Birmingham university to lecture his business studies students on the glories of the free market. But people close to him are not expecting that. He is not politician. He is more likely to hang on until there is a change of government, when he will be paid off and given the boot.

LEGAL NEWS

THE high court will soon play host to an intriguing action for malicious falsehood brought by Tory MP Rupert Allason. The defendants are Alistair Campbell, the former *Daily Mirror* hack who is now Tony Blair's press adviser; Andy McSmith, another former *Mirror* hack who is now a political correspondent on the *Observer*; and Mirror Group Newspapers.

The action stems from the £200,000 libel settlement Allason received from the *Mirror* in 1992. Within a couple of days he had been warned that a newly-elected Labour MP, Jimmy Boyce, had tabled an early-day motion suggesting that he ought to donate his damages to the Mirror Group pensioners.

When Allason approached Boyce, the Labour MP alleged that he had been put up to it by another Labour MP, Richard Caborn, as a favour to Alistair Campbell and Andy McSmith. At around the same time an item appeared in the *Mirror* reporting that the early-day motion had been tabled and claiming that it had been signed by 50 MPs. This was untrue.

Allason got on to Arthur Davidson, the Mirror Group's then legal boss, who assured Allason that Campbell had not been involved. This was not quite enough to satisfy Allason, who demanded and obtained from Campbell a written denial of any involvement. However, when a few days later a similar item appeared in the *Western Morning News*, the regional paper sold in Allason's constituency, Allason was told by the hack responsible that he had been put up to it by the *Mirror*. From the outset Campbell and McSmith have denied any involvement.

To win Allason has to prove not only that Campbell, McSmith and Mirror Group knowingly published a falsehood, but also that he suffered financial loss as a result (he claims he lost a $100,000 book contract as a result of the bad publicity and has affidavits to back this up). The case, set down for a three-day trial before a judge alone on 23 April, promises to be entertaining, with Allason appearing for himself against Charles Gray QC and examining, among others, Mirror Group chief executive David "Rommel" Montgomery, whom he personally served with a witness subpoena outside his Maida Vale home early one morning.

NOOKS and CORNERS

MORE on the sad South Coast of England: last week, Worthing; this week: Hastings. The Sussex fishing village and, latterly, seaside resort has had much to contend with over the centuries: Norman armies, the Luftwaffe, that sort of thing. But the most consistent and malevolent force seeking to wreck the place in recent years is undoubtedly Hastings borough council.

As with so many local authorities imbued with the asset-stripping ideology of the 1980s, character counts for nothing and commercial development everything in the minds of the councillors. And one asset crying out to be stripped and raped is White Rock Gardens, an elevated park situated high up between Hastings and St Leonards and affording splendid views of the pier, the castle and the sea.

It is to be the site of a new "Family Leisure Centre" to be built by Messrs Leisure England Ltd. This consists of a leisure pool, a multiplex cinema, restaurants, pubs, a shopping mall, a night club — the usual, in fact, but with the exciting addition of a "1066 Experience". This will be a "state-of-the-art virtual reality experience", gushes a director of Leisure England Ltd. "Visitors will actually be there, right in the middle of the Battle of Hastings", and can no doubt enjoy the experience of being shot in the eye with an arrow.

William the Conqueror built Battle Abbey to celebrate his victory in 1066, but the proposed Family Leisure Centre is not, alas, to be in the Norman style of architecture. Rather, it is to be in the Post-Modern motorway-hypermarket style, designed by the Architecture and Planning Group Ltd of — an address to treasure, this — The Georgian House, Gas Ferry Road, Bristol. These imaginative architects propose blank walls some 50 ft high facing towards the Magdalene Road conservation area to the east — the character and appearance of which the borough council has a statutory duty to preserve or enhance.

Some hope. The White Rock proposals are part of Hastings borough council's long-term strategy of developing any open space it can get its hands on. There was Summerfields, a valuable open space running into the town centre from the north-west, which the council bought in 1966 and has since built offices on. Then there was the Central Cricket Ground, which Hastings acquired as an open space in the 1870s but which is now the site of a huge covered shopping centre which, when finished, threatens to ruin half the small shops in the town centre — the cricket club having been persuaded to relocate on Summerfields.

Will the council get away with another crude piece of asset-stripping? Although it enjoys the enthusiastic support of the South East England Tourist Board — naturally — this time there is considerable opposition, not least from English Heritage, which considers the scheme an overdevelopment and a departure from the local plan. And now the department of the environment has served an article 14 notice, which prevents the council from granting itself planning permission for this development. So the latest Battle of Hastings is not over yet.

MY PICTURE shows a building not in Regency Hastings but Victorian London: Leopold Buildings in Tower Hamlets. Designed by Henry Darbishire — best known as architect to the Peabody Trust — and built in 1860-61 by the Society for Improving of the Condition of the Labouring Classes, they once looked over Baroness Burdett-Coutts' long-lost Columbia Market.

Like many such blocks, Leopold Buildings were basic and — before the advent of the tower block — seemed a little grim. Yet they were solidly built. But, having been sold to Tower Hamlets in the 1970s, they have been allowed to deteriorate. Now the borough has secured department of the environment "estate action money" to rehabilitate the building.

This ought to be a good thing, but it is not. The architecture is being mutilated. No longer will tenants enter by the balconies, but from new lift towers at the rear. Every flat is being rebuilt and turned back to front, with chimney breasts removed, so that what were bedrooms or living rooms become entrance halls. Worse, from the point of view of the public, is that the iron balconies which are the principal feature of Darbishire's design are being crudely bricked up. And finally, so that the DoE gets "value for money", a sort of bungalow is being built on the roof.

No private landlord would be allowed to get away with this, nor to mutilate a listed building in this way. Yet in addition to DoE money being used to repair damage caused by the poor management of Tower Hamlets over the years, English Heritage is giving grant aid to a scheme which perverts the architectural integrity of an important early example of social housing. Why? Phase two is not yet begun, so there is time to reconsider.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

[Kathy] Acker's work is often about the endorphin state of grace. She, personally, comes very easily, and an intimate knowledge of the rigours of climax explains the primal sexual receptivity and waves of animal hunger that recur in her work. This same sensuality (rather than the desire to make any radical comment) led to piercings — in particular, in her outer labia. "I don't know if you can put this in The Guardian," she says, "but I came spontaneously for a day and a half."

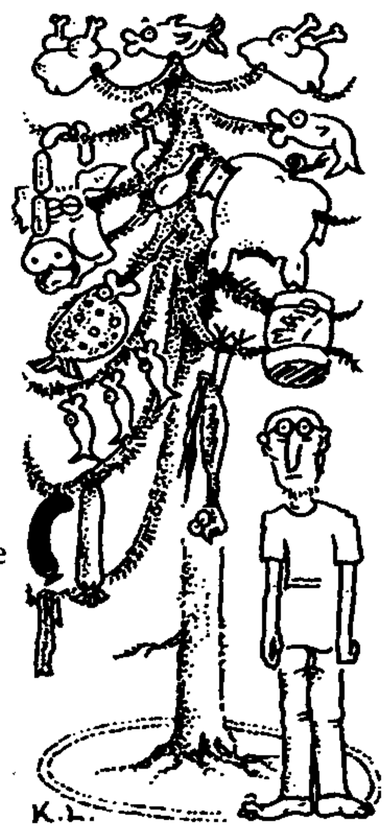
JESSICA BERENS
Guardian

Such relating depends on a capacity to resonate with another emotionally without being swamped, to empathise without feeling impelled to make better, so that there is space for those responses so often disregarded because they fail the test of drama. Enabling relationships depend upon an equal emotional exchange and a certain emotional fluency. enabling relationships make it possible for us to hold contradictory feelings simultaneously, rather than retreat into emotional fundamentalism where all is good or bad or love and hate and where scapegoating — projecting — dominates our relation to self and others.

SUSIE ORBACH
The Times

When I went up to Oxford — how impossible it is to write this nowadays without some overarching sense of irony; 'up' has lost its innocence and seems to have distinctly icky, sexual connotations, as if entering the university were commensurate with pederasty (actually for many it is now and always has been) — there was a much bigger branch of Brown's.

WILL SELF
Observer



Onlookers on the main campus were equally as taken by the artist Alastair MacLennan who performed an 'actuation'. Alastair has an international reputation for his actuations which combine meditative techniques with a live art sensibility. He appears as a human figure casually and temporarily set in the environment as a site-specific performance work. His actuation, situated outside CSB, took place from 9.30 in the morning to 7.00 at night and saw Alastair remain virtually motionless and trancelike, while a collection of raw fish and meat hung from a tree in the centre of a chalk circle drawn on the floor.

Huddle (Univ of Huddersfield newsletter)

Mutable sexualities, body parts semiotically open to erotic opportunity, sexed bodies recast as morphologically plastic and phantasmatically unbound — such parsings, grafted from the language of Judith Butler's chapter on "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary" in "Bodies That Matter", while eschewing an outright utopianism of gender, nevertheless rekindle great expectations for a genuinely gender-troubled future.

EMILY APTER
'Acting Out Orientalism: Sapphic theatricality in turn-of-the-century Paris' (in Elin Diamond [ed], 'Performance and Cultural Politics', Routledge)

Sarah is standing stock-still, eyes weary under her lashes, singing like an angel and wearing a black Sixties A-line dress. Just below her chest, a thread hangs precariously, catching in the white light. You want to ask her to stop and let you rip it off, until you realise that a dress with a snag in it is just perfect for Dubstar. Imagine if, at the height of her powers, Brigitte Bardot knew what she would become. That moment of realisation is their *oeuvre*. Recall the three most heart-wrenching pop lyrics of the year — Oasis's "please don't put your life in the hands of a rock 'n' roll band/they'll throw it all away" ("Don't Look Back in Anger"), Take That's "Someday soon this will be someone else's dream" ("Never Forget") and Blur's "When the days seem to fall through you/just let them go" ("Universal"). That is how each and every Dubstar song makes you feel.

EMMA FORREST
Independent

CONTRIBUTORS: Everyone, D. Christian, K. Mill, M. Zapp, G. Hayles. J. Patrick.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Holiday Movies
(All channels)
Bodyguards (ITV)

THIS was not a good year for Easter traditions. An opportunistic hoot of a *Heart of the Matter* special on BBC1 claimed to have found the bones of Jesus Christ in a cellar in Jerusalem, thus questioning the Resurrection. The European Union was threatening to take mini Easter eggs off the shelves because they contained gelatin derived from British beef. And — for the first time in years — a bank holiday passed without a James Bond movie on ITV.

This third shift in Easter traditions might be assumed to have been accidental but, like the first two, it was a sign of the times. For the Easter holiday movies in general were a notably odd lot.

Radical and pioneering Channel 4 showed the 22-year-old James Herriot movie *All Creatures Great and Small*, the 55-year-old weepie *How Green Was My Valley* and, as its bank holiday treat, *The Homecoming: A Christmas Story* (some mistake, surely?), a feature-length pilot for *The Waltons*, dating from 1971.

The BBC had *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), the war movie *They Were Expendable* (1945), *Mary Poppins* (1964) and *Arabesque* (1966). ITV led with *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) and — in the Sunday and Monday afternoon slots where you would normally have expected to find a Bond movie or at the very least an *Indiana Jones* movie, the commercial boys meekly scheduled the Vatican melodrama, *The Scarlet and Black* and the Connery-Caine romp, *The Man Who Would be King*.

There is a strange story behind this array of anodyne entertainment over a period which has previously been one of the programming showcases. A few weeks ago, on Wednesday 13 March, ITV had originally planned to show its new action series, *Bodyguards*. But, a fortnight before transmission, it pulled the show fearing the Wednesday night competition from the successful new BBC1 drama, *Silent Witness*. Instead ITV scheduled the James Bond movie *Licence To Kill*. That Wednesday morning, a then unknown scoutmaster called Thomas Hamilton ran amok in Dunblane.

ITV decided that the title and content of the Bond movie had been rendered tactless and instead put out the Kevin Costner movie *Field Of Dreams*, a sentimental Hollywood conceit about dead people coming back to life — and, specifically, the ghostly reunion of parents and children — apparently being thought more appropriate to the moment than one about a secret agent shooting people.

This left ITV with a strategic problem. If Bond or Bond-type movies were unbroadcastable immediately after Dunblane, the next occasion on which it showed such a film would in effect be a declaration that Dunblane was now irrelevant and shootybang movies were okay. An additional complication was that the *Daily Mail* and other media watchdogs were watching the schedules more closely than ever before because of the post-Dunblane pressure for the v-chip (the American-invented electronic censor in the set) to be installed in British sets. So television was on its best behaviour over Easter. Hence — to borrow a line from Ernst Blofeld or Auric Goldfinger — it was goodbye, Mr Bond.

Meanwhile *Bodyguards* — the original first choice programme for Wednesday 13 March behind *Licence To Kill* and *Field Of Dreams* — finally made it to the screens last Wednesday night. Ironically, it turned out to have a Bond connection: its writer Jeffrey Caine is co-scripter of the latest 007 film, *Goldeneye*.

Bodyguards' most important connection, though, is with *The Professionals*, the 1970s LWT series in which Gordon Jackson ran CI5, a special operations unit of the security services, with Martin Shaw and Lewis Collins as Bodie and Doyle, his senior roughnecks. In *Bodyguards* John Shrapnel runs a special operations unit of the Metropolitan police, charged with diplomatic protection. Indeed, last week's pilot even used a plot once employed in an episode of *The Professionals*: politicians from a volatile African state attending a conference in London.

This attempt to remake *The Professionals* for the 90s offers a useful opportunity to compare television drama now with television drama then. For a start, the roughneck duo is now coeducational, with Sean Pertwee and Louise Lombard as the chief protectors, Shaw (a deliberate nod to *The Professionals*?) and Worell. Secondly, the tone is both more cynical and more politically correct than the 70s series. Bodie and Doyle, tough as they were, were doing God and the Queen's work in the world. Shaw and Worell know they are safeguarding African trade for a bunch of shabby British politicians.

Thirdly — and crucially — *Bodyguards* is far less violent than the operatically macho *The Professionals*, its main aggression residing in exploding cars. Although the tabloid moralists refuse to accept it, British television drama is notably decorous in the matter of violence. It is that fact that makes absurd the post-Dunblane and pre-v-chip fear so evident in the Easter schedules.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

OZ CLARKE and Jilly Goolden, the resident oenophiles on the BBC's *Food and Drink Programme*, have turned their attention to that much-vilified product, English wine. And so, two weeks ago, they descended on Dorking to film an item about the local vineyard. They came away enraptured. "Absolutely superb," gushed Jilly.

This endorsement should do wonders for the profits of the vineyard's owner, Adrian White. However, in its enthusiasm the programme neglected to mention one small fact: the selfsame Adrian White is a governor of the BBC.

CAMERA maintenance engineers at BBC TV news and current affairs were delighted to find that Chris "Scarface" Cramer, their loutish "head of newsgathering", had forgotten to remove the tape of his holiday video before returning a borrowed camera.

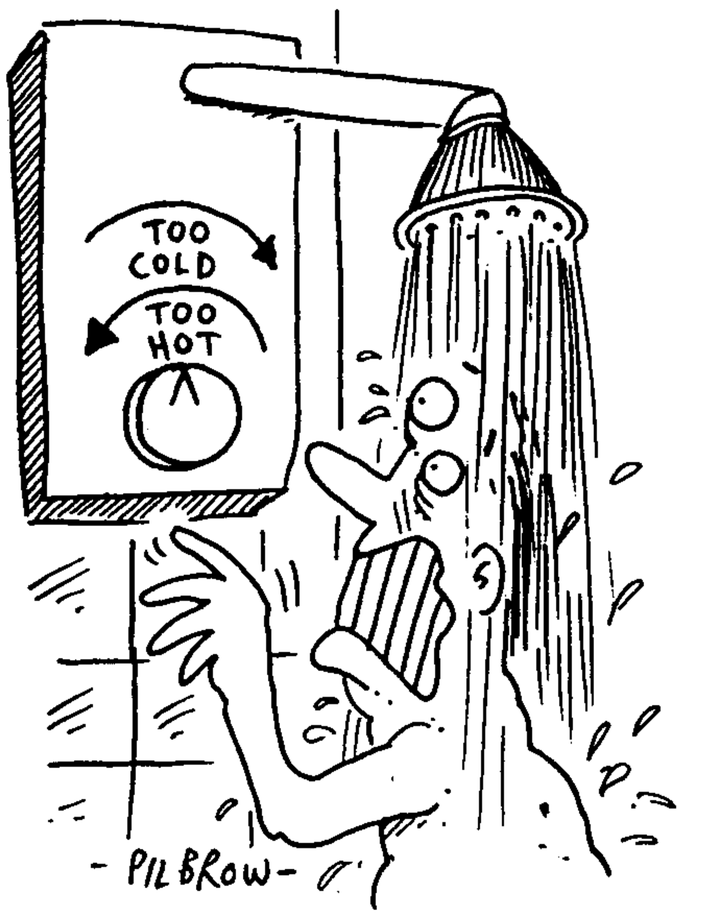
Basking in the sycophancy of hand-picked cronies at his farewell party at the Reform Club before defecting to CNN, Cramer settled down to watch the customary presentation video featuring various episodes from his BBC career. He was deeply embarrassed to find himself watching a sequence from a long forgotten holiday video, which showed him prancing, naked and full-frontal, around a Mediterranean swimming pool.

THE day after the BBC announced that its Arabic TV service had been axed there was extensive coverage in most of the broadsheets — an exception being the *Times*, which waited 24 hours to report the decision, and even then gave it just 72 words in the bottom half of the News in Brief column.

Such reticence may reflect the fact that Rupert Murdoch set a precedent in TV censorship by personally ordering the removal of BBC services from his Hong Kong-based Star TV to suck up to the Chinese (*Eyes passim*).

Murdoch hacks and readers had better get used to his political manoeuvring for there's plenty more to come. Through cross-shareholdings involving American company MCI, Murdoch now exercises influence over our own much loved British Telecom. It in turn is attempting to merge with Cable & Wireless, not least because the latter controls Hong Kong's telecom system. Should the deal go through, subject to Beijing's approval of course, Murdoch will have even more reason to curry favour with Hong Kong's new Communist rulers, and none of his media outlets will be allowed to jeopardise this.

ROUGH JUSTICE
TONIGHT'S A DOCUMENTARY THAT WILL CAUSE A SENSATION...
WE PROVE CONCLUSIVELY THAT THE PERSON FOUND GUILTY OF THE CRIME...
Reconstruction
ACTUALLY DID IT!
Kim Flynn



THE furore at the BBC about *Panorama* presenter and Princess Di interviewer Martin Bashir and his exciting inventiveness with documents might ring a bell with keen *Eye* readers.

In October 1993 the *Eye* ran a couple of articles about another Bashir *Panorama* triumph — on Terry Venables' financial dealings. Central to the programme was the allegation that Venables had "bunged" his friend, Chelsea restaurateur Gino Santin, £200,000 for increasing the price of Paul Gascoigne when he was sold by Tottenham Hotspur to Lazio of Rome — when the price had not in fact increased at all.

The allegation depended on a single document, a fax from John Campion, of City solicitors Allen & Overy, representing Lazio, to James Perry of Ashurst Morris Crisp, representing Spurs. The fax stated: "Our client would be prepared to pay £5.5m" for Gazza.

Since the price eventually secured with Santin's help several weeks later was £5.5 million, it seemed from this fax that Santin had not increased the price at all. This allegation immediately drew a writ from Santin, on receipt of which the BBC promptly apologised and shelled out an enormous sum in damages.

Long before that settlement, the *Eye* was mystified by the Allen & Overy fax. The £5.5 million figure jarred with two faxes either side of it which offered much less — £4.8 million. And there was no record of any response by Lazio to the £5.5 million offer.

At the time the *Eye* asked Mr Campion if the letter could have been a fake. He refused to answer the question and referred us to Lazio's lawyers in Rome, Lionello Celon. When the *Eye* asked them if the letter was a forgery, they would not reply either, claiming the sale was covered by a "confidentiality clause" which barred them from disclosing the relevant documents. The mystery remains.

JOBS disappear at the BBC on a daily basis, but director-general John Birt has made at least one new appointment: Bob Eggington, "Head of New Process Development, News and Current Affairs".

His appointment was accompanied by a spiel from Tony Hall, md of news and current affairs, that "Eggington would drive through NCA the efficiency opportunities and new working processes and practices offered by new initiatives including the introduction of ENPS and co-siting".

Hacks soon twigged that this was Birtspeak for "job cuts". Which is just as well since Eggington's brief includes supervising the move of all journalistic operations to White City, a transfer that will offer plenty of job-axing opportunities.

Eggington's rise to management has been remarkable. Not so long ago he was a lowly hack in a radio newsroom. Even then, after wheedling his way into a management post, he did not refuse Jenny Abramsky's regular requests for him to park her car. From being the editor's car parker-in-chief, Eggington has come a long way. As well as being widely recognised as a Beeb hatchet man, he also speaks fluent *Arslikhan*.

A MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST (2)

IS there no end to the officially-sanctioned persecution of Sara Keays, the former lover of Cecil Parkinson? Not if parliament has anything to do with it, apparently.

Earlier this year the speaker asked the select committee on procedure to investigate whether MPs ought to be allowed to break high court gagging orders. This followed the widely-publicised motion from Brian Sedgemore MP identifying Sara Keays and her daughter Flora as the victims of a fearsome injunction known as a "Mary Bell Order" (see *Eye* 891).

Without any publicity, the committee took evidence about the Keays case from the master of the rolls and the official solicitor. But, strangely enough, it did not approach either Brian Sedgemore or Sara Keays. When she learned of this, Keays asked if she could give oral evidence. The request was turned down. However, she was told that if she wanted to send in a written submission it might be considered.

She has now done so, and the *Eye* has obtained a copy. "It surprises me," she writes, "that I am not permitted to give oral evidence, yet you heard the presiding judge in the court of appeal which refused leave to lift the injunctions and which denied me leave to appeal to the House of Lords. You also heard the official solicitor and I wish you to be under no misapprehension about his role in my daughter's case, in which his only function is as guardian *ad litem*, to speak in court on matters relating to the injunctions. Flora is not and never has been a ward of court and I alone am responsible for her."

Keays also points out that her daughter has not been in school since 1994 and, in her view, has been failed by the education authorities; but the injunction prevented her from bringing this to the attention of parliament or anyone else until Sedgemore decided to break it. "Although I am taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights, this could take two years or more. My daughter cannot wait another two years for her right to an education to be restored to her."

While the committee deliberates, the speaker and her understrappers have already anticipated its findings — as Sedgemore discovered shortly before Easter when he tried to put down three written questions to education secretary Gillian Shephard about Flora's schooling. The table office refused to accept the questions unless he removed Flora's name; he then appealed to the chief clerk, who upheld the ban on the speaker's behalf, saying that he should give the details of Flora's case in a separate letter to Shephard. The questions on the order paper, which were due for reply this week, thus ask the minister "if she will direct the Avon County Council or its successor authority the Bath and North East Somerset Council to discuss with her mother the future education needs of a child whose name has been sent to her".

It seems odd that the speaker should ask her procedure committee to advise her whether Flora can be named in parliament, and then reach her own conclusion before the committee's report has even been written. To confuse matters further, by telling Sedgemore to name Flora in a letter to the minister she has in effect incited him to break the injunction. Shome mishtake, shurely?

THE winners of the annual Glenfiddich awards for food and drink writing are usually chosen from a shortlist of four. But this year's shortlist in the drink writer of the year category consisted of only two names.

One was Malcolm Gluck, who writes a column for the *Sainsbury's* magazine in which he recommends wines sold by J. Sainsbury plc. The other shortlisted candidate was Jancis Robinson, who presented a series about wine for BBC TV last year.

The programmes were made by Jancis and husband Nick Lander's production company with financial support (£50,000) from J. Sainsbury plc. Sainsbury's press office put out a press release to all wine writers before the series was transmitted, pointing out which of its wines were being discussed in the series. These wines were then promoted in-store with "Jancis Robinson recommends..." stickers on them. Although this commercial link raised some eyebrows at the time (*Eye* 882), the BBC seemed blithely unconcerned.

It is an odd coincidence that the only two British wine-writers thought worthy of the shortlist should both have commercial links with Sainsbury's. Who chose them? The drink judge is usually another writer, generally the previous year's winner. This year, however, the judge was Allan Cheesman — who, by an even more amazing coincidence, just happens to be the director of wine-buying at... J. Sainsbury plc!

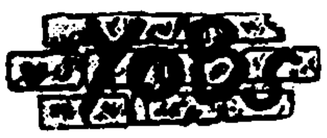
WORLD OF HYPE

AMID all the dire publicity British Gas has received over the past year or two, the company could always rely upon the support of Melvyn Marckus, City editor of the *Times*.

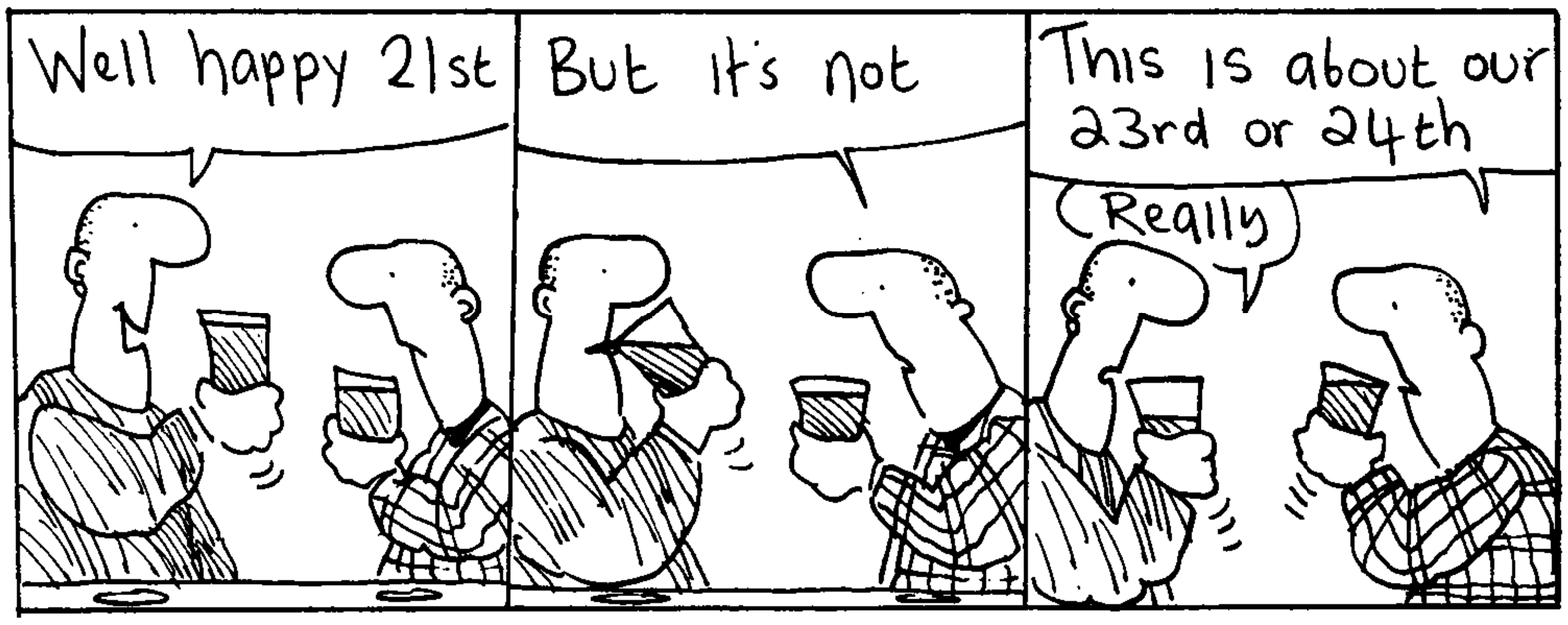
He consistently argued that British Gas should be allowed to retain its monopoly, and decried any suggestion that its charges were too high. He even defended Cedric Brown's 75 per cent pay rise. More gratifyingly still, he ran a long smear campaign against the gas regulator Clare Spottiswoode, denouncing her as part of "the mafia which controls energy regulation".

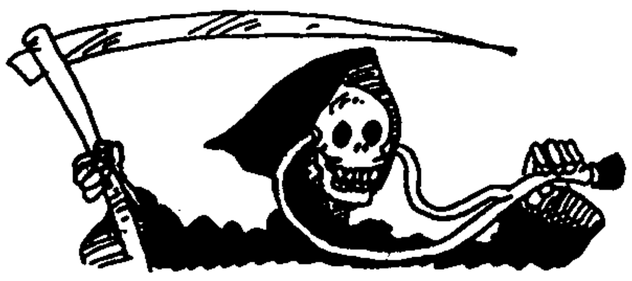
Last December he very nearly came a cropper when it was revealed that these very words appeared in anonymous "briefing notes" attacking Spottiswoode which had been distributed to sympathetic hacks by Angus Maitland, a senior public relations consultant employed by British Gas. Hacks at the *Times* wondered how Marckus would survive the discovery that he had been so happy to spread British Gas's black propaganda.

They need wonder no more. It was announced two weeks ago that he is leaving the *Times* to collect a Cedric-style salary (rumoured to be £200,000 a year) from the PR firm Luther Pendragon — whose clients, by a remarkable coincidence, include British Gas.



HUSBAND





DOING THE ROUNDS

"OUR ability to provide treatment has simply outstripped health authorities' ability to pay." So says David Moss, chief executive of Southampton university hospitals trust, who must find £11 million to maintain the services his trust has provided this year in the next financial year.

Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham health authority is £9 million under, with waiting lists set to suffer. The **National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts** predicts a similar gloomy picture of lack of purchasing funds across the country.

If five years of NHS reforms have achieved anything, it is that splitting services up into purchasers and providers makes it glaringly apparent there isn't enough money in the system. If the purchasers can't purchase, the providers can't provide.

● LAST autumn **Horton general hospital** employed management consultant Irving Steeper of **Roughton Facilities Management (RFM)** to review the trust's estate department structure and staff requirements. One of Mr Steeper's recommendations, adopted by the board, was the amalgamation of the three top posts and the dismissal of those managers who did not have "the necessary qualifications".

Mr Steeper was present during the first round of interviews for the newly created post of "head of facilities management". But despite his technical advice the board was unable to agree on a candidate. Mr Steeper than left the trust for a short while, only to reappear as a candidate for the post he recommended when it was readvertised. He was shortlisted and appointed.

● **SOUTH Manchester University hospitals trust** has said goodbye to three senior managers after an accounting mistake sparked a £2 million cuts crisis. Forty nine surgical beds have also gone, as may 30 more managerial posts in a bid to claw back the deficit caused by a miscalculation of the trust's income.

Thus far finance director Roger Underwood, contracts manager Simon Youatt and his deputy Chris Wolvin have carried the can. They may, however, seek reemployment at **Sheffield University's Centre for Health and Academic Research**. The centre has already smiled kindly on the plight of Keith McLean and David Martin, both heavily criticised in the **Yorkshire health authority** illegal payments scam (*Eyes passim*). MPs were told by NHS chief executive Alan Langlands that McLean was "not fit to be a part of the new NHS", but both he and Martin have landed academic posts to shape future health policy in Sheffield and beyond. As Ron Akehurst, director of the Sheffield centre, put it: "It's a sorry world if people are not allowed to make mistakes."

● TAKING an early bath is Robert Bridge, deputy finance director of **Cornwall and Isles of Scilly health authority**, who has decided to quit through ill health rather than face disciplinary action over his formation of a private company which bid to provide mental health services in his own district.

● Resigning for rather nobler motives is David Reilly, lately a consultant surgeon at the impecunious **Mount Vernon and Watford NHS trust**, because "patients are being put at unnecessary risk, despite the best efforts of the consultants, nursing and support staff". He also claims **Watford hospital** has slipped from "a first class unit to a third class one, with lip service paid to quality and patient-centred care". Mr Reilly will shortly reappear at **Arrowe Park hospital** in the **Wirral**.

● FURTHER evidence of the success of the internal health market comes from a national survey by healthcare analysts **C4 Consulting**.

It found that nearly a third of the 419 NHS trusts are now worth less than when they were under health authority control and 14 have "poor financial stability". So poor, in fact, that had they been in the private sector "bankers would have sent in their administrators". The bottom five performers are: **London's Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear** (8.6 out of 100); **Greenwich healthcare** (9.0); **Crawley and Horsham** (18.6); **Humberside Ambulance Service** (21.8); and **Royal United hospital, Bath** (25.5).

In all, 133 English trusts have capital worth less than the £1 per share when they were established, with neighbouring trusts particularly hard hit by wasteful competition. Consultants at the **United Leeds Teaching hospitals** and **St James hospital trusts** are now balloting colleagues for a unification of the two, to create the biggest trust in the country. As Dr E. Will, chair of Jimmy's medical staff committee, observed: "Competition between clinical groups is counter productive. Moreover, concentration of research funding and clinical services development is being impeded by the business interests of the trust."

● THE department of health has become adept at getting the taxpayer to bail out its health reforms.

The NHS has long been a safety net for private hospitals, referring their cock-ups back to public intensive care beds. More recently, fundholding GPs have been allowed to tinker with the market knowing that health authorities (ie you, the taxpayer) are obliged to bail them out when things go wrong. Now, Stephen Dorrell is deciding how to "safety-net" his coveted private finance initiative scheme.

The commonest reason for private firms not investing in lame duck hospital trusts is the quite understandable fear that the trusts may in the future go into liquidation taking all the investment with them. Dorrell is now proposing emergency legislation to hand over the liquidation tab to the taxpayer. Companies will thus be offered a risk-free investment while the nation is exposed to a potential five billion pound liability bill.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

THE promised national expansion of intensive care beds has been shortlived in health minister Gerald Malone's constituency hospital, **Winchester's Royal Hampshire**. The extra beds have gone to help pay off a £320,000 debt. The kindly trust also plans to increase some student nurse rents from £100 to £250 a month.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

WITH BSE having almost completely disappeared from the headlines over Easter, apart from a few encouraging stories about beef sales picking up, it would be easy to assume the immediate crisis is over. This is far from the case.

Only a handful of cattle are going through the markets, and animals over 30 months of age are temporarily banned from the food chain. These older animals must wait on the ministry of agriculture, aka Maffia, which is to arrange for special cutting plants to be licensed so that the carcases of beef animals can be boned out before sale.

With the sale of cull cows also banned, pending implementation of a slaughter programme, this means that surplus cattle — which should by now have been slaughtered — are stacking up on farms at the rate of 50,000 a week, some 200,000 since health secretary Stephen Dorrell made his fatuous statement to parliament on 20 March.

Desperate enough in its own right, the situation is compounded by four other factors. First, many of the cattle destined for the Christmas market were not cleared out because of the last BSE scare, when beef sales dropped 11 per cent. These have been over-wintered and were being readied for the spring sales that never happened. Already, therefore, there were larger numbers of cattle in the system than normal.

Second, a large number of these cattle are now older than 30 months and heavier than the 370 kilogramme limit for putting them into EU intervention stores. For the near future, and possibly until July when the Maffia gets its act together and licenses the special cutting plants, these cattle are unsaleable.

Third, because of last year's drought, feed was already short and expensive. Over-wintering cattle have bitten heavily into reserves and are having to be turned out prematurely, consuming grass which would have made up next winter's hay and silage crops. The grass itself is hardly ready due to the long, cold winter.

As if all this were not enough, many barns and cattle sheds, intended for housing spring calves, are normally left empty over winter to provide a disease break. But since many have been stacked up with unsold Christmas stock, new calves being placed in recently vacated housing are suffering an untypically high level of infection. Conditions are right for an epidemic of bacterial "scours", a killer of young cattle.

As each day passes conditions get worse, building up to an unprecedented disaster, the like of which has never been seen in modern agriculture. So, while agriculture minister Douglas "Piggy" Hogg prevaricates over plans for the EU summit on 30 April, there is a gigantic time-bomb ticking under him.

Very soon, out of feed, out of cash and out of time, farmers will have to start killing cattle in the fields where they stand. Not a few farmers will follow them as they take to their shotguns as the only way out of a crisis for which there seems no solution.

Needless to say the impending disaster is largely unrecorded by the media. Perhaps after hyping up the scare for all its worth, too few editors and journalists have their hands clean enough to report on a situation which is largely of their making.

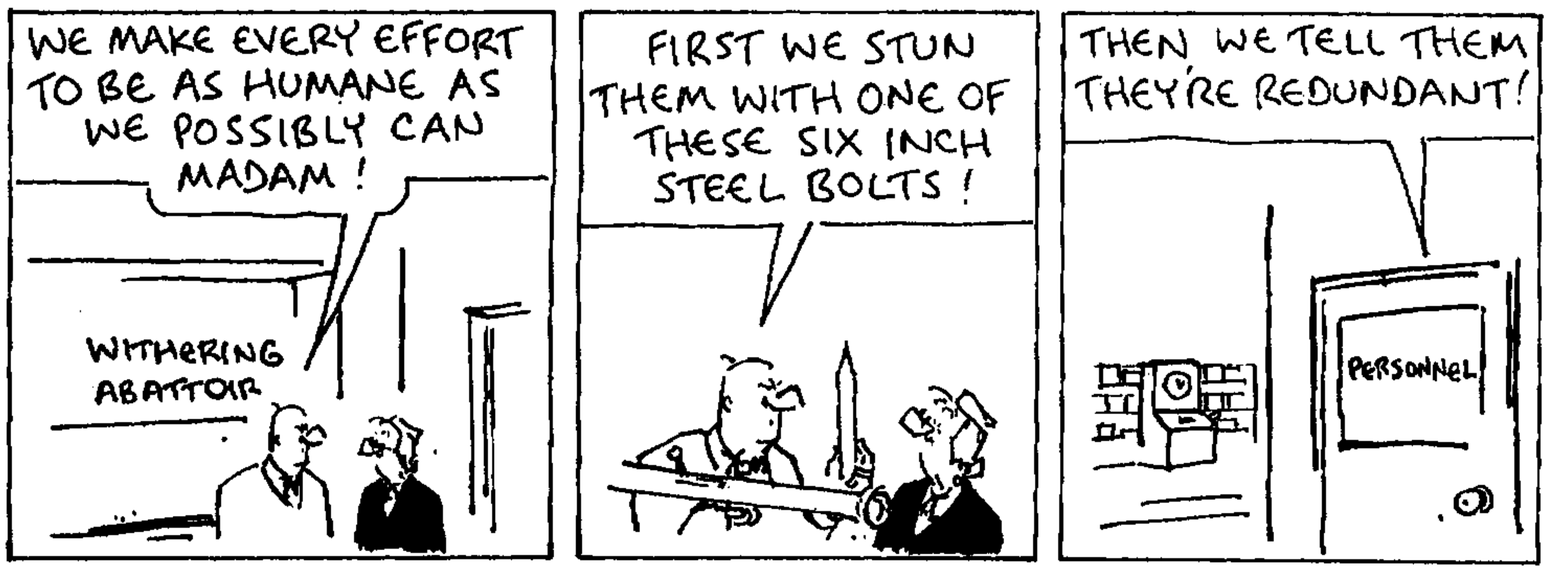
An honorable exception must be made here for Emily Green,long-serving food correspondent of the Independent, whose "revulsion and shame" at the Indie's part in whipping up the BSE hysteria has led her to resign from the paper which she helped found. In her departing letter she says that there could be 200 deaths in the farming community as a result of the BSE crisis.

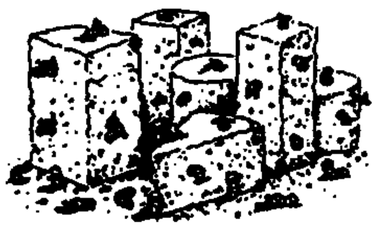
If the corpses of farmers outnumber those killed by Creutzfeld Jakob Disease will this finally be considered newsworthy?

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


WE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BE AS HUMANE AS WE POSSIBLY CAN MADAM!
WITHERING ABATTOIR
FIRST WE STUN THEM WITH ONE OF THESE SIX INCH STEEL BOLTS!
THEN WE TELL THEM THEY'RE REDUNDANT!
PERSONNEL



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser
Friday, 19 April 1996

IMMORAL FIBRE?

A NEW asbestos scandal is emerging in East Kilbride where 265 families live in flats full of Amosite — the nastiest kind of asbestos — courtesy of recently wound-up East Kilbride development corporation (EKDC).

Residents have bought most of the 30-year-old properties from the corporation, which, shortly before winding up last year, wrote warning them against scraping or drilling into their walls lest asbestos fibre be released into the atmosphere.

Suspicions were aroused two years ago when workmen replacing windows in the 43 flats that had not been sold began to remove asbestos and throw it over balconies into skips where children later played. No safety measure was taken.

EKDC has claimed it is neither legally nor morally responsible for what has happened and denies that it knew asbestos was present. The denial is hard to fathom for several reasons. Someone in authority must have ordered the quarter of a million square feet of asbestos used in building the flats; twice in the 1980s the Scottish office urged EKDC to check all housing for the presence of asbestos; and health and safety executive (HSE) documents show the HSE had discussed asbestos with the EKDC.

East Kilbride district council, now responsible for the 43 flats that haven't been sold, wants to remove the rest of the asbestos as part of a modernisation programme. Locals are not convinced the council is acting in their best interests. Asbestos removal is being done on behalf of the district council for £1,600 per flat, while private residents are being quoted £7,000 per flat. The council's latest letter says asbestos fibre will be released into the air, but there will be "no real risk". So that's all right, then. Ish.

TORY STINK-TANK

MORE disastrous local elections loom for John Major next month and the antics of members in Portsmouth do not bode well. A group of Tories expelled from the local party has formed "Tories Against Sleaze".

The members became disenchanted that a former disgraced city councillor — Terry Gregory, who served a two-year suspended sentence on five counts of dishonesty after an expenses fiddle — had been given a key post in a Portsmouth Tory think-tank.

They were also peeved by the Scott report and by their MP David Martin having his bottom photographed on a TV comedy show, obviously hoping to improve his huge majority of, er, 242.

The expulsions came after months of in-fighting presided over by the Tories' area agent, who curtly refused to act as mediator between the warring parties. The agent? Our old friend David Simpson, ex-philandering deputy area agent for London, where he was best known for stifling Sara Keays' attempts to be selected as candidate for Bermondsey.

Tories Against Sleaze are fielding six council candidates in the Tories' safest seats, hoping to split the vote. Terry Gregory, meanwhile, has also fallen out with the beleaguered Tory councillors and is standing as an independent.

The Tories proper entered only one nomination instead of three in Fratton ward. Either they were so bemused by the political machinations that the nominations were not entered in time, or, heaven forbid, they couldn't persuade anyone to stand in the doomed seats.

FOOT-IN-MOUTH DISEASE IN OXON

WHEN South Oxfordshire district council privatised its information technology (IT) department, the decision was openly endorsed by the local MP, privatisation-mad deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine.

However, the company chosen by the council for the contract has now gone spectacularly bust after South Oxfordshire abruptly terminated the contract and brought it back in-house. The council said the company failed to meet its deadlines; and at least £800,000 of taxpayers' money has been spent on the unfinished program. So how did this showpiece privatisation go wrong?

The contract was not competitively tendered and went instead straight to McLintock Ltd, owned by the former council deputy treasurer John McLintock. McLintock had been given money by the council to set up the company in the first place, and the contract he made with the council to run its mainframe-based computer services contained no service level agreements.

When the service was contracted out, the leader of the council was one Rosalie Monbiot. Her husband was a former president of the Conservative constituency association which had selected Hezza as its local MP. In return for Rosalie's superb management of her showcase council, both she and her husband were named in the honours' lists.

BLAIR v. OASIS

LABOUR embarrassment over schools will continue in Islington, north London, home of Tony Blair and Canonbury Infants and Junior schools.

Parents and governors of the two are about to opt out of local government control in protest at the Labour-run council's plans to merge them into one huge primary.

Campaigners presented the education department with a 500-name petition and 100 individual letters of complaint. But Islington is ignoring them and going ahead with the merger.

It has been necessitated by lack of funds, the council says, despite earlier assurances that the move was not financially motivated. Education chair Phil Kelly had written to local MP Chris Smith claiming: "We would not proceed with the merger against the clear wishes of the majority of the parents."

Protesters have now written to Islington-residing Blair (whose son is sensibly educated outside the borough) asking for support and quoting Labour's recent *Diversity and Excellence: A Partnership For Schools* paper. They are still

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

PROBLEMS in Camden where Victor Fanawopo, a council solicitor, was ousted, on the grounds of lack of funds, by borough solicitor turned deputy chief executive Amanda Kelly when his contract expired, even though it had been renewed four times. A week later he was approached by a recruitment firm as ideal candidate... for the job he had just left. An industrial tribunal awarded him £10,000; and Kelly spent £40,000 fighting the case. Camden is now appealing, which could cost another £40,000.

IN BRIEF

GLASGOW: The new Labour council is already back-peddling on its threat to close at least 20 under-subscribed schools to save taxpayers £3.1 million. Eight Govan councillors are demanding that three primary schools and one comprehensive in their constituency remain open. For the sake of the bairns? Er, no. "We could lose this seat to the SNP at the general election if local schools are closed by a Labour council," say Govan activists.

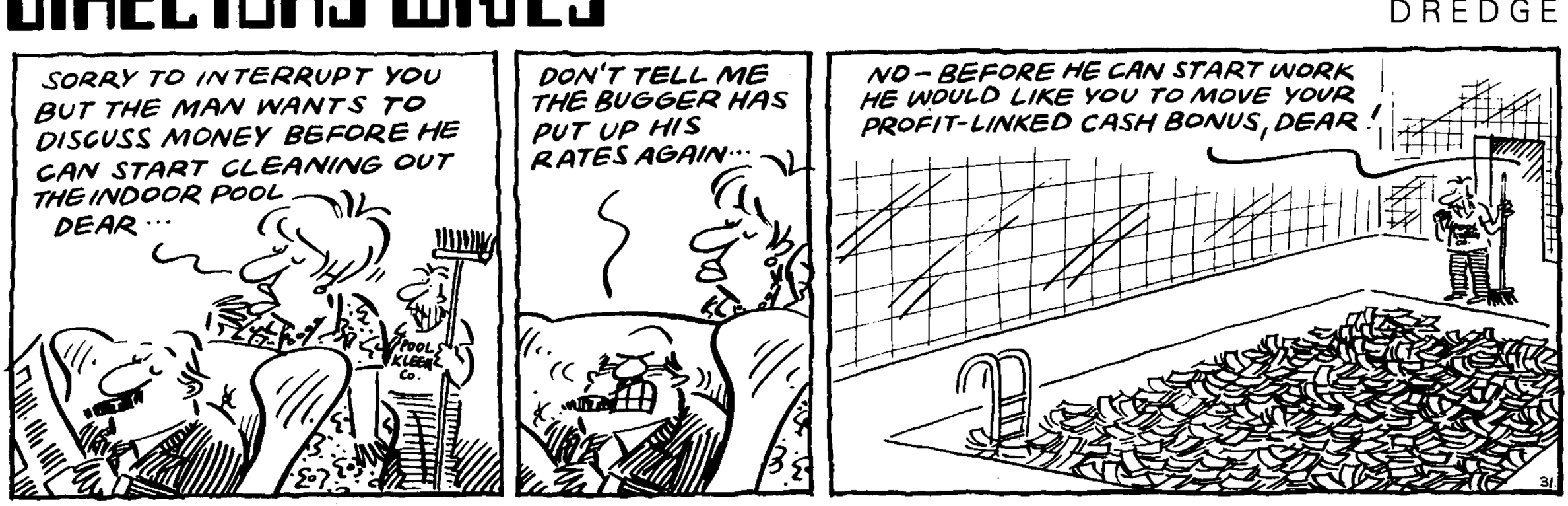
CLEVELAND: Never let it be said the Tories don't like spending money on local government. On Teesside, where Cleveland county council has been abolished, the unloved authority used to pay £50,000 a year for an education director. Education has now been taken over by *four* authorities — Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Stockton — each of which has to pay for its own director. Total new cost: £206,000!

HULL: Former mayor Dennis Woods, the expenses-fiddler who claimed attendance money for council meetings he never went to and was jailed for three months by Lincoln magistrates, has whinged his way to an early release after claiming he was "afraid of prison life" and had lost four inches from his beer gut. Woods's local community group is hosting a welcome home party, but will the disgraced councillor pay back the £500 he effectively stole from Hull's taxpayers?

PRESTON: The Labour council can no longer ignore Operation Angel, the long-running investigation into corrupt property dealings. Following the confidential report of ousted chief executive Geoff Driver, the national Labour party has suspended Coun John Monk, who had been running a car park in Preston which, according to Driver, did not have planning permission and was only entered for ratings assessment after the authority's finance chiefs found out about it. Unfortunately the council can't backdate the valuation entry, and so income has been lost to the public purse.

DIRECTORS WIVES

DREDGE


SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOU BUT THE MAN WANTS TO DISCUSS MONEY BEFORE HE CAN START CLEANING OUT THE INDOOR POOL DEAR...
POOL KLEEN Co.
DON'T TELL ME THE BUGGER HAS PUT UP HIS RATES AGAIN...
NO - BEFORE HE CAN START WORK HE WOULD LIKE YOU TO MOVE YOUR PROFIT-LINKED CASH BONUS, DEAR!
31

Letters

The rest is silence

Sir,

It is an inexcusable disgrace that any British publication should find one iota of humour or satire in the Dunblane atrocity (various parts, EYE *894).*

That you would go one step further (or should that be lower) than the hacks you so often taunt is a sad and shameful irony. Any "dig" at the state of British journalism, British journalists, the IRA or MPs with links to the arms industry, using one of the vilest criminal acts in recent history as leverage, is, quite frankly, sick. I can think of nothing, and certainly none of the "stand-alones" above, that needs the "flavour" of Dunblane in order to better highlight its own glaringly obvious outrage. How on earth can you justify it?

Had you indulged in the dignified silence you advocated in GNOME, it might possibly have occurred to you that some things are too sensitive to extract humour from, no matter what the angle. It was an opportunity when PRIVATE EYE *could have shown, just once, its more human side by condemning outright or simply keeping schtum.*

Not only did you miss it, but just like the tabloids you condemn every issue, you cashed in on it.

Nice one.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN HISLOP,
BFPO 239.

PS: I would appreciate your cancelling my subscription forthwith.

Soldiers of misfortune

Sir,

Your recent article "It's a man's life sentence in the army", obviously about this poor tour guide in Cyprus who was murdered by three pissed-up squaddies, could be construed as a disgustingly tasteless "joke" on a tragedy.

But not by me. Sod the lot of you.

D. SHEAD,
Bournemouth, Dorset.

Emergency

Sir,

It would make no sense to keep the books from Sion College together (Nooks & Corners, EYE *894) if they were transferred to King's College, because King's uses a standard cataloguing system (Library of Congress) and Sion College one unique to itself. The books within any one library must be shelved according to a common catalogue reference system.*

C.J. NEWMAN,
via email.

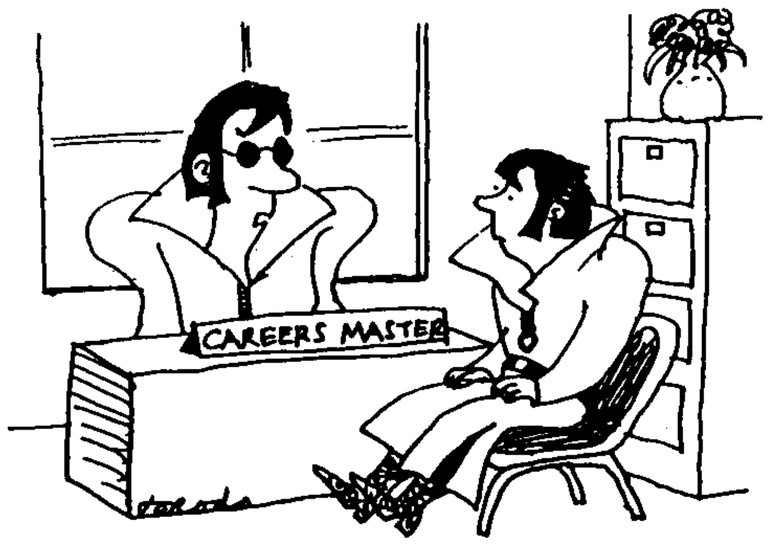
Merchandise

Sir,

*Before reading about David Mellor's part-time occupation as a merchant of death (*EYE *894) I had thought that his irrational rantings in the wake of the Dunblane massacre were nothing more than an obscene attempt to exploit the victims in a desperate bid to retain his seat at the next general election. It now seems he may have had a motive that was sinister rather than merely sick.*

The question that has to be asked is this: to which bunch of indiscriminate killers is Mr Mellor planning to sell firearms confiscated from their legal owners? The Bosnian Serbs? Hamas? The IRA?

Yours faithfully,
EDMUND J MELVILLE,
Shepton Mallet.



"There are too many Elvis impersonators already, son."

Taken for grant aid

Sir,

A number of inaccuracies in relation to the expanding, London-wide Migrant Training Company need clarification.

Firstly, MTC does not owe Camden Council £500,000; it has repaid the loan, made in 1989, entirely. The need for the loan arose because of bureaucratic delays in receiving European Social Fund grants, as I found out when first delegated to MTC in 1991.

Secondly, rather than trade while insolvent MTC's board would have dissolved the organisation. The real victims would then have been MTC's dedicated and efficient staff, and especially its trainees, who now include some of London's most unquestionably vulnerable people, refugees from places such as former Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, Kurdistan and similar war zones. Natural targets perhaps for racist Tory bigots seeking to justify their foul asylum act, but not normally abused by the EYE.

Yours faithfully,
COUN DAVE HORAN,
London Borough of Camden.

A curry favour

Sir,

What a disgrace! Bugged in the Gandhi! (Hallo!, EYE *5 April).*

But your microphone, carefully concealed amongst the extra hot lime pickle, while picking up every word seemed totally unable to distinguish between my remarks and those of my enthusiastic research assistant whose choice of restaurant it was and who is now earnestly examining his Aeroflot airline ticket to Archangel. He will be unavailable for comment as he is making an unexpected fact-finding visit to investigate pollution from leaking Russian nuclear submarines.

And as for the most outrageous and painful observation of all by "The Marquesa", I can but urge her to change her contact lenses and not believe all in the GUARDIAN *Diary. I had just had a haircut.*

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL FABRICANT MP,
House of Commons.

Down and out

Sir,

Your article implied that Mike Hardwick was arbitrary in firing cleaners who failed to find him asleep under his desk and locked him in his offices. I think that you missed the point. He didn't fire them for locking him in. He fired them for failing to clean the office.

What kind of job were these cleaners doing if they failed to find Hardwick under the desk? Surely if they were doing any cleaning (and there were three of them), it was their job to hoover under the desk?

ANNA F. RADLAUER,
via email.

In the buff

Sir,

*Paul Foot's account of how Colin Wallace was induced to get himself photographed in SAS gear (*EYE *895) reminded me, as an old Kennedy assassination buff, of those photos of Lee Oswald which came to light shortly after his arrest. They showed Oswald posing with three lethal weapons — a rifle to shoot JFK, a handgun to shoot Patrolman Tippit and a left-wing newspaper to prove he was a commie punk! This image virtually shaped the investigation which followed and still represents the official version of events.*

Yours faithfully,
B J BURDEN,
Braintree, Essex.

Four taste

Sir,

Are you certain that KALEIDOSCOPE *is a Radio 3 programme (*EYE *895)?*

I had always been under the impression KALEIDOSCOPE *is to be heard on Radio 4.*

Sincerely,
ANDREW CROFT,
Gidea Park, Essex.

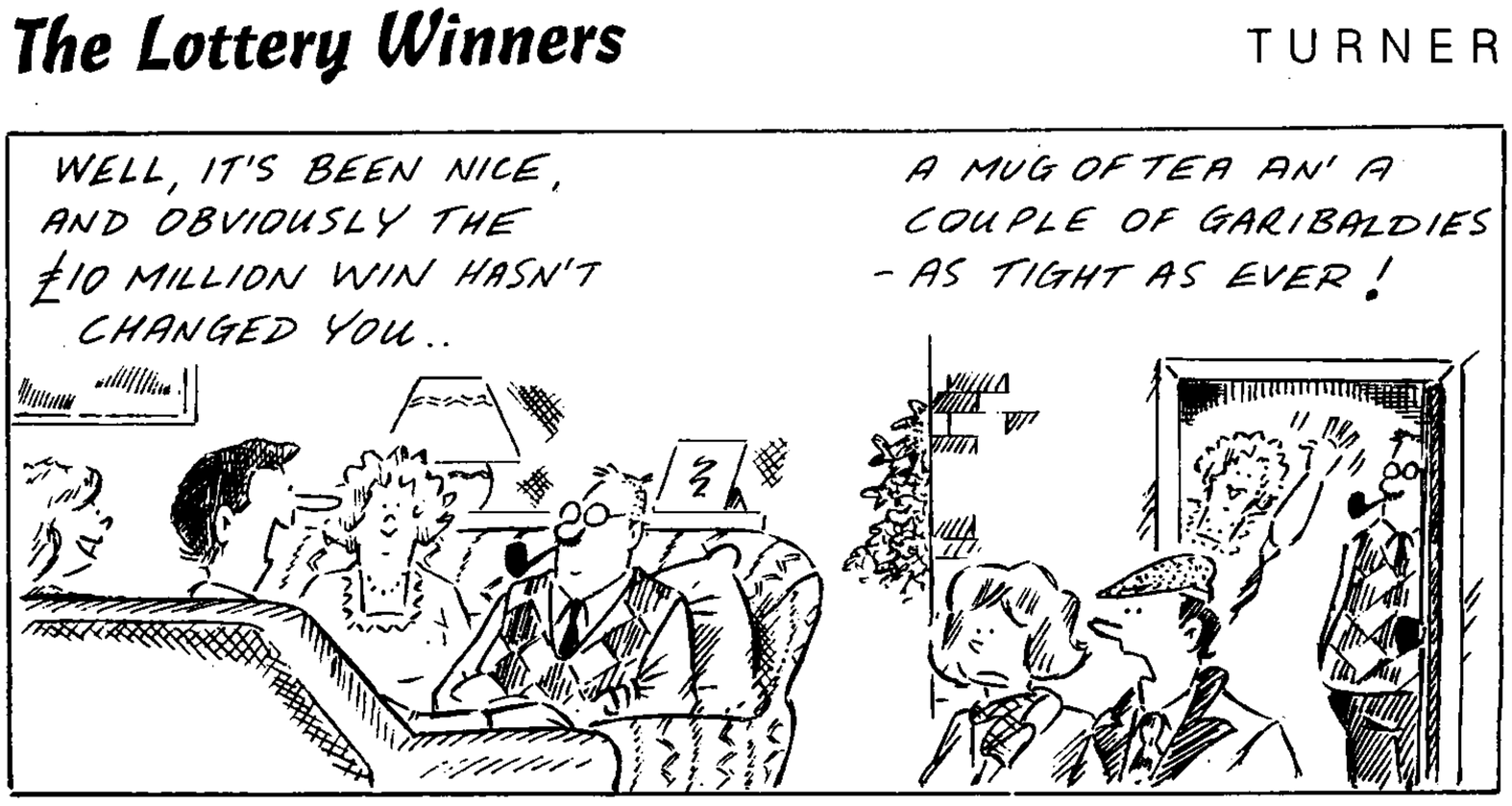
Orchestral movers

Sir,

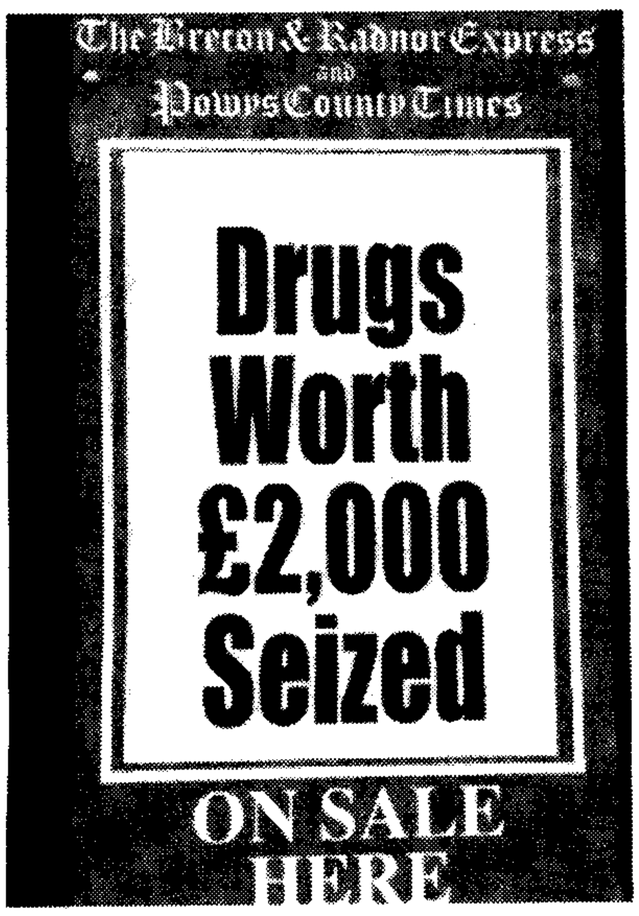
How appropriate that Lunchtime O'Boulez's plug for Jilly Cooper's new novel APPASSIONATA *(*EYE *895) should have inspired him to try his own hand at fiction.*

Without going at length into anything as tedious as the facts, it is true that the Association of British Orchestras has recently reached agreement with the Musicians' Union on payments to freelance players with, as far as I know, the knowledge of all concerned. This came after a period when the agreement had lapsed. On my own account I can confirm that I am paid exactly the same rate for expenses as the players employed by my orchestra. It's been that way since I err… drove the van.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN SUMMERS,
Northern Sinfonia.


The Lottery Winners
TURNER
WELL, IT'S BEEN NICE, AND OBVIOUSLY THE £10 MILLION WIN HASN'T CHANGED YOU..
A MUG OF TEA AN' A COUPLE OF GARIBALDIES - AS TIGHT AS EVER!

I-SPY



Submitted by J.B. Morris. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Spun yarn

Sir,

Re: Cartoon last issue. Shame on you — you have misquoted my e-mail address. Unless you correct, I shall no doubt miss important messages — eg what's on at Webley, reviews of latest films such as HUMANOPHOBIA, *venue of next nine-legged race and so on.*

For your information my address is actually IncyWincy@ waterspout.co.uk

Yours sadly,
INCY (Jacqueline Pye),
via email.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I truly believe that the confidence I have is unbelievable."
PRINCE NAZEEM HAMED, Radio 1
(William Richards)

"And don't forget tomorrow night — the whole of Newcastle versus Manchester United."
FOOTBALL COMMENTARY, Radio 5
(C E Ings)

"I watched that without the sound, so I couldn't quite see what was going on."
ADRIAN CHILDS, BBC Radio 5 Live
(Michael Harman)

"They didn't change positions, they just moved the players around."
TERRY VENABLES, ITV
(Mark Rodger)

Mad Cow – you write

Sir,

I'm afraid Mucksprеader has it wrong on at least one count in the last issue. There is ample evidence for spongiform encephalopathies "jumping" from species to species. Scrapie, for example, can be very easily produced in mice (hardly close relatives biologically) by grinding up infected brains and, er, feeding it to them. And the same goes for most of the other variants.

The truly scary thing about the disease, and one reason there was a lack of proper research, is that these "prion" conditions are not caused by bacteria or viruses, which contain DNA and can therefore be easily detected, but by a simple mutation of a protein that occurs naturally in most mammals' brain tissue. There has been considerable controversy over this in scientific circles; in fact the scientist who first proposed that it was spread by an infective agent which contained no DNA whatsoever was blackballed by the establishment for coming up with such a revolutionary theory. Embarrassingly enough, he seems to have been right. It seems the mutated version of the protein infects healthy forms simply by coming into contact with them and changing their shape.

If this sounds far fetched I refer you to the past five to six years' issues of NEW SCIENTIST. *The first reports of BSE-like conditions turning up in domestic cats were scoffed at because how would a virus or bacteria mutate that fast? It's simply not feasible. Of course if the cats came into contact with infected sheep or cattle CNS tissue in their food, this would explain the sudden epidemic of loopy moggies.*

Sorry — we ARE *all doomed. Mine's a double. Cheers!*

ANDREW SIMMONS,
via email.

Sir,

If, as claimed, BSE is a prion and not a virus…

- *Why are all the animals from a given herd slaughtered (as in France and Ireland) if only even one animal is found to have BSE?*

We in the UK are about to slaughter all cows over a certain age when they have come to the end of their "working lives". As scientists/government claim not to believe BSE is passed on through the air or by bodily fluids, surely it is totally irrational to kill all the herd? If, on the other hand, BSE is passed by such contact, surely all contacts should be slaughtered: ie, animals from the original farm; those at the same day livestock market; the same transporter; even the same shipload. Of the 15,001 cattle reported with BSE in 1995 up to last October, 8,370 (56 percent) were found to be born after the ruminant feed ban.

- *Why, if BSE is not in the "muscle" (ie the flesh/meat) as claimed by government scientists, is every part of a BSE-diagnosed animal destroyed and the "muscle" not kept back and used for meat? If, on the other hand, BSE is in the "muscle" of an infected animal, why is the milk — taken from that animal until the day BSE is diagnosed — not also contaminated? It, too, is a blood product.*
- *Why, when CJD victims are operated on, are the surgical instruments thrown away after use, as even boiling them will not destroy the disease, but slaughter men, with bare bloody hands in the filthy environment of the slaughter house, can take out the spinal column of one animal, who may well have BSE, and then move on to the next animal without so much as washing their hands or knives?*

Does the government and the meat-farming industry really think this Heath Robinson approach is going to placate the public?

Yours sincerely,
SARAH-JANE PENNANT,
Tonbridge, Kent.

PS: I am somewhat surprised by Mucksprеader's latest claim: that BSE has been around for 100 years. How does this tally with his previous thoughts on organophosphorous pesticides being to blame? As I understand it, these pesticides have only been around since the second world war when Germany invented them as a nerve gas. I can only assume Mucksprеader spouts off as incoherently as the rest of the farming and scientific fraternity on this subject.

Sir,

New Mucksprеader lacks justification for the comments relating to the basis for the putative relationship between BSE and CJD. Scientific proof for the aetiological relationship is difficult to establish.

Scrapie is, so to say, the primal model for the prion diseases. It has long been suspected that eating sheep brain was a cause of CJD in man, albeit outright proof is lacking. But it need not be the sole cause of a dreadful neurological disease.

With this as background it was foolish, to say the least, to feed infected sheep neuro-offal (brain, spinal cord) to cattle and chickens. Knowing prions to be insusceptible to most microbial inactivating procedures, it was hazardous indeed for the government to a) permit and b) deregulate the processing of any neuro-offal to animal feedstuff.

There now exist a number of instances, natural and experimental, of trans-species transmission of prion disease, thus establishing at least the simplest of cause-and-effect relationship. The slow decline in the incidence of BSE after the ban on the neuro-offal feedstuff would also suggest a causal role for that material.

Mucksprеader's remarks about the scientists are at best ill-founded, discredit the article and tend to exculpate a thoroughly culpable government.

Yours faithfully,
J P WALSH, FIBMS,
Chingford, Essex.

Sir,

On page 8 of last week's EYE, *you criticise the Government for its inactivity over suspicious leukaemia cases at Sellafield, even though there is no direct evidence to link these cases with radioactive leaks.*

On page 6 of last week's EYE, *you criticise the Government for taking action over suspicious CJD cases among young abattoir workers and butchers,* BECAUSE *there is no direct evidence to link these cases with BSE in cattle.*

Could these two stances possibly be entirely unrelated? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
HARRY THOMPSON,
Dunjokin', Beds.

Sir,

I understand that between four and five million cattle are about to be dumped at sea. Could the BSE committee (SEAC) or the Maffia please advise us whether we are in any danger of this deadly disease (CJD) being transmitted to us through the fish chain?

Should we: a) Remove the brains and spinal cords before dumping — at some trifling cost to EU taxpayers; or b) Dump them in Spanish waters — at no cost?

Surely we should be told — urgently?

Yours faithfully,
TORQUIL NORMAN,
London NW1.

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

WHAT ARE YOU PUTTING INTO CAESAR'S FOOD, CASSIUS?
ONLY PURE ORGANICALLY GROWN NATURAL PRODUCTS.
TOADSTOOLS, HEMLOCK, DEADLY NIGHTSHADE...

FUNNY OLD WORLD

Compiled by Victor Lewis-Smith

● "I want the money. I will not accept anything less than $200,000 for them," Sridhar Chillal told reporters gathered outside his house in Pune, India. "People pay through the ears for an extinct butterfly or a rare stamp. But these are more special. These are the only fingernails of their kind in the world. I want the money. A museum will give me the money. God has told me."

Chillal, 59, was hoping to find a buyer for his fingernails. "They are the world's longest fingernails. My left hand nails total 226 inches, with a 52-inch thumbnail. I began growing them at school, 45 years ago, after breaking by mistake a long nail grown by my teacher. He challenged me to grow nails as long as his, that is how I started. It took me seven years to get married, because no girl wanted anything to do with these nails. Eventually, I married a close relative with a hare lip. My job as a photographer was also very hard, because I have to keep my nails in this special black pouch and it is hard to operate a camera with one hand. Because of my nails, I have become famous throughout India, but now they are causing problems. I cannot do what other men can with their hands. I do not sleep properly, I have a 24-hour headache, the blood circulation to my brain has been greatly affected, I cannot hear properly, and there are pains in the tips of my left fingers. Typing is out of the question. So, as long as the price is right, I feel it is time for a change." *(The Jeddah News, 7/3/96. Spotter — John Welz)*

— ● —

● *"Waiting for traffic is sometimes a very tedious thing," said Roberto Nacianceno, addressing delegates at a meeting of the Metro Manila Development Authority. "That's why our traffic police are now being trained to entertain motorists by learning traffic-graphy — a blend of traffic and choreography."*

MMDA chairman Prospero Oreta had earlier explained how the dancing policemen would lift the spirits of Filipino motorists. "The idea originally

comes from the famous dancing cops of Bangkok. But Thai policemen always dance on their own, whereas Manila's trafficgraphy uses an entire troupe of dancing policemen. Our first group, the Los Del Rios began dancing last week, and have already performed in some of the city's busiest intersections. They wear bright blue shirts and short pants, and direct traffic while dancing to the tune of 'Macarena'. It cheers up the motorists. The only problem we have had is that some drivers become so enthralled that they stop, and have to be prodded to drive on. This system is a great improvement on the loudspeakers which we tried last year. Those have now been withdrawn, because officials kept using them to hurl insults and obscenities at anyone who didn't obey the traffic signals." (The China Post 10/4/96. Spotter — Richard J Daly)

— ● —

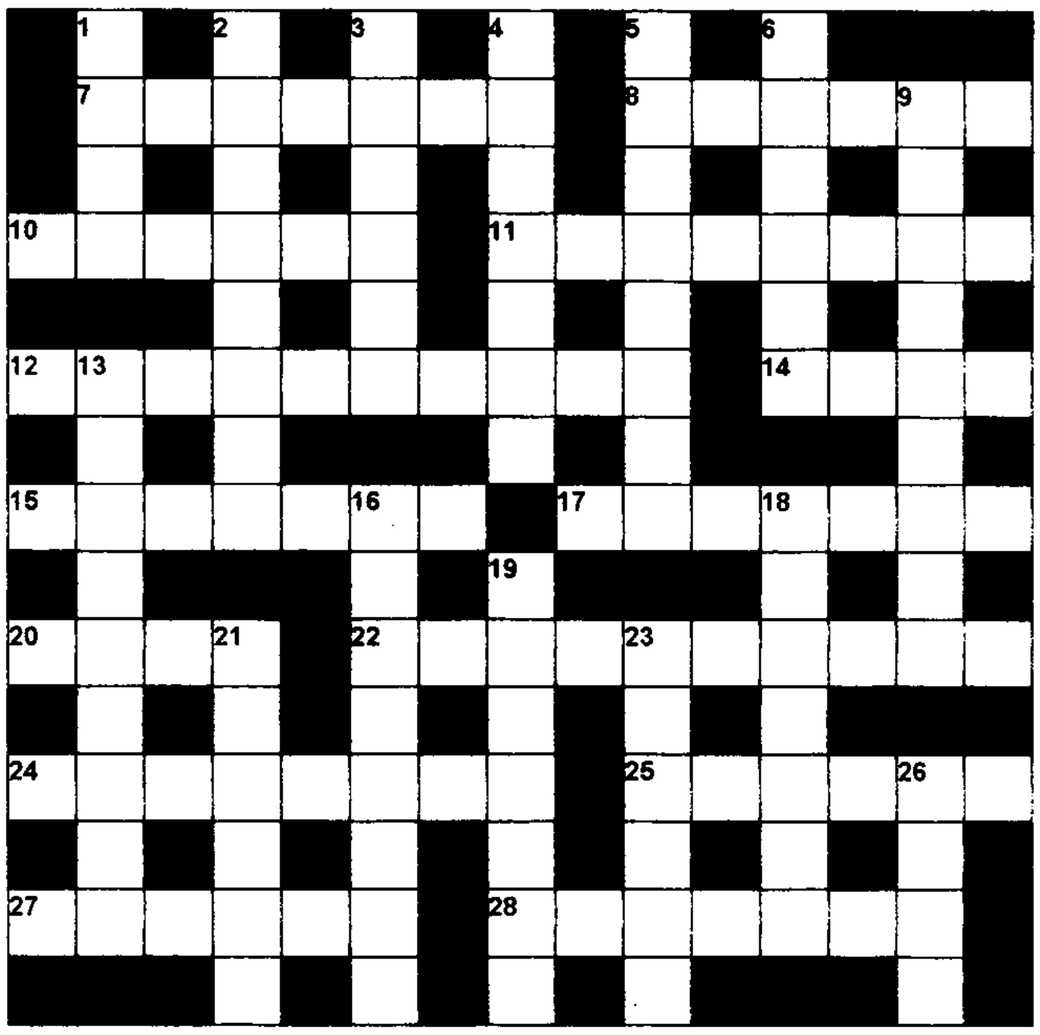
● "My husband was always pretending to hang himself," Tati Andri told the coroner's court in Jakarta. "Neighbours were used to a gibbet being built, then taken apart in our garden, so I didn't pay much attention at first. But on this occasion, when I realised that he'd gone very quiet, I went over to him and found he really had."

Tati was explaining the circumstances surrounding the death of her husband Ilriza, in their home on the Jakarta Fire Brigade Housing Complex in the suburb of Ciracas. "Ilriza was trying to persuade me to sell my late mother's solid silver eyepatch, to pay for repairs to his motorbike. I refused so, when he didn't get his way, he produced a length of rope and threw it over a roof beam. Then he tied a noose, slipped it round his neck, and began shouting 'sell the eyepatch or I'll hang myself'. As usual, I took no notice. I think he must have slipped because I heard him shout 'Hold on... this isn't happening,' then silence. The funny thing is, it turned out that there was nothing wrong with his motorbike at all, just some dirt in the petrol feed."

Firefighting colleagues confirmed Tati's story. "He used to pretend to hang himself in the office all the time," they said. "We'll miss seeing him dangling above his desk." *(Jakarta Post, 6/4/96. Spotter — David Owen)*

EYE CROSSWORD 51 by Cyclops

£100 Winner SIMON FRANCIS



ACROSS

7 Now she gets her kicks from taking excited members in hand (7)
8 Kinky sex duo in retirement (6)
10 One test of public opinion when there's sod all on West End theatre (6)
11 Whoppers revealed by model girl in pisspoor *Sun (8)*
12/28 They talk liberally of gassing groups of students (10,7)
14 Fortune got back by Labour leader in tax (4)
15 Brenda cavorting with Scots Guards (7)
17 Phallic creature seen in Brenda's arms (7)
20 The lout from Bolsover's flipping not finished! (4)
22 Scared about potential CJD transmitters? These are beyond criticism (6,4)
24 One snog botched in Di's favoured venue, we hear — expected behaviour from England fanatic (8)
25 Luvvies getting together quite nauseous at end of play (6)
27 Right and Left between them record each withdrawal (6)
28 (see 12)

DOWN

1 Giving one to Patsy quick (4)
2 Cilla's bloke having it off gets nothing from such a practice (8)
3 How Charles speaks of himself after getting on the blue channel (3,3)
4 One who screws a rock band? (7)
5 Prison child's play with no aggravation according to US government dept. (8)
6 Collapse after attempt to take on knockers (2,4)
9 How Rugby Union only stirred up one of the Church's bitter internal wrangles? (6,3)
13 The North-East lies derelict as a result of him (9)
16 Hitler's only seed factory? (8)
18 Conservative leader's inside all right, surrounded by mugs, making gaffes (4-3)
19 School has dirt on stupid type (7)
21 What's Carling's game, abandoning right for second rate sod? (6)
23 Seamen flustered into forced evacuations (6)
26 Tonto's homilies full of bullshit (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 26.04.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 50

ACROSS: 6 Pisces 8 Evasion 10/25ac Cheque-book journalism 11 Knob 12 Privates 14 Henry V 15 Stalker 17 The arts 20 Brenda 22 Sideshow 24 Dyke 25 (see 10) 27 Alfresco 28 Martyr.

DOWN: 1 GCHQ 2 (see 21) 3 Delouse 4 Hack 5 Kicking ass 7 Inherit 9 Nooky 13 Volunteers 14 HRH 16 EVA 18 Trotsky 19 Escudos 21/2 Royal Assent 23 Denims 25 Just 26 Lord.

Rocky Marriage *(shurely 'Horror'?)* Service Book

No. 94: The Solemnization of Holy Divorce

The President: Dearly unbeloved, we are gathered here to unjoin together this man and this woman in Holy Divorce, which is an honourable estate instituted of God, who never married.

All: I knew it wouldn't last.

President: If anyone should know of any just cause or impediment why these two should not stay together let them speak or forever hold their peace.

All: What about the children?

President: Objection overruled!

The Divorce

President: Who taketh this woman away from this man?

(The cohabitee or new partner shall then step forward. The President shall then cause the husband to say after him as followeth)

Husband: I, N., divorce thee, M., and promise not to love, comfort, honour and keep you and certainly not to forsake all others, which is where the problems started, to be honest.

All: I told you.

(The woman shall then take off her ring and throw it at her husband)

Wife: With this ring I thee divorce. With all my heart I thee detest, and with half your worldly goods I am off, including the building society account, the CDs and the dog.

All: That seems fair.

President: I now declare you ex-man and wife.

All: It's so lovely. It reminds me of my own divorce.

President: Those whom God hath joined together the Church of England shall put asunder.

All: Yes indeedy.

(All shall process out to Mendelssohn's Divorce March)

© C of E.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

BRITAIN'S 500 MOST BORING MEN

(continued from page one)

372 Sir John Barcode, 79. Assets: £28 Billion. Chairman of Barcode Frozen Barcodes PLC. Supermarket - Retail-Control - Tycoon and inventor of the "8 items or less" checkout counter.

373 Nigel Mousemat, 17. Assets: £27 Billion. Chairman and Chief Executive of Nigechip Software PLC. Computer games wizard and inventor of *Meganerd 7* and the controversial *Brillo v. Asian Babes* (adults only).

374 Sir Sidney Swine, 83. Property Developer. Assets: £26 Billion. Chairman Interswine Holdings.

375 Jaspan, 31. Assets: £25 Billion. Pop singer and Songwriter. (Real name William Hutton). Founder of the pop band P45.

376 Sonia Stagecoach, 68. Owner of LondonBusCo, British Rail, Channel Ferries, British Airways, M25, etc.

(That's enough rich bores, Ed)

ON OTHER PAGES

Hattersley Eats Goose: Dog Apologises.....p.7

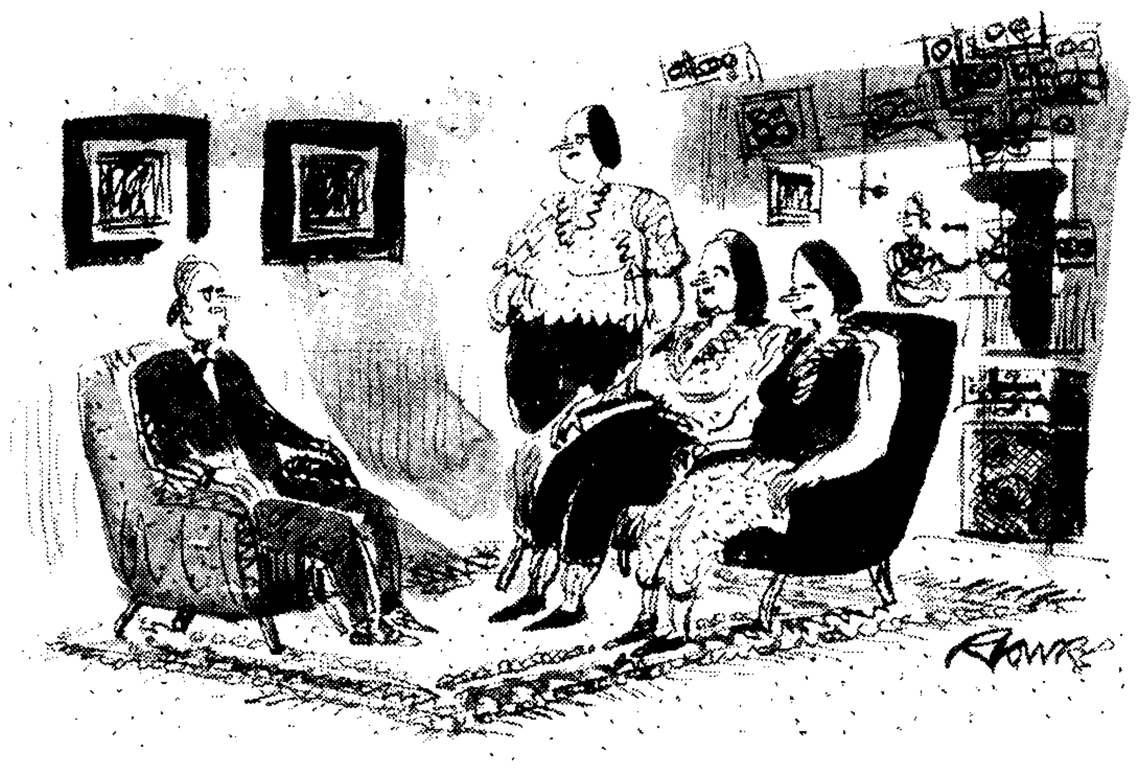
"Was that a flash of brilliance, David? You know what the doctor said..."

Old Rhymes Revisited

(To the tune of The Red Flag)

The working class can kiss my arse
I've got the Deputy Leader's job at last

(Trad)



"Well, Long Tall Sally, Boney Moronie and Skinny Minnie; it's been a long, long time since you were the inspirations for those 'fifties rock and roll songs..."

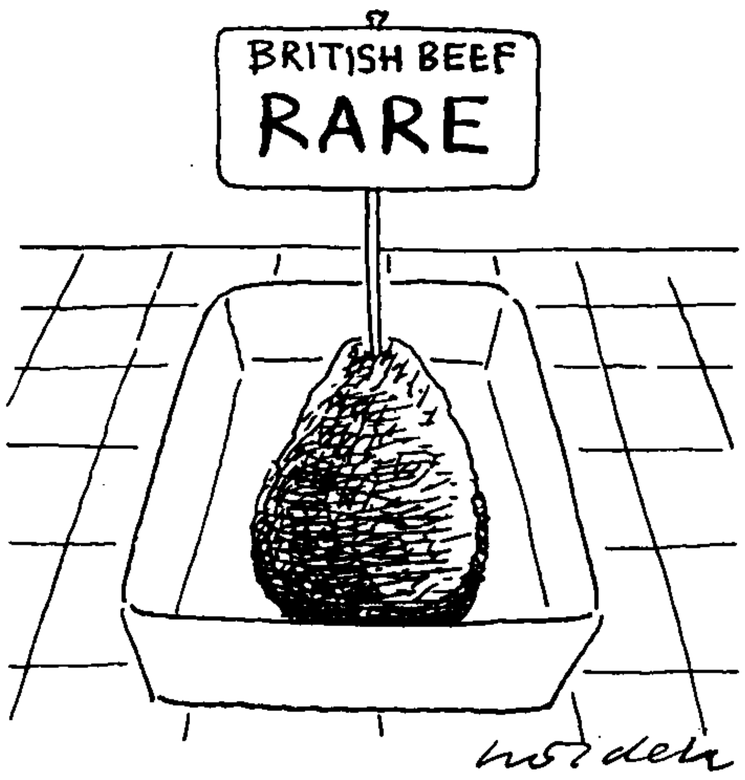
The Secret DAIRY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Saturday

The mad cow crisis is over. I have finally drawn a line under it. My friend Mr Hogg has told everyone that there is nothing wrong with the cows, but we are still going to kill them all. This will undoubtedly restore confidence and everyone will start buying beef again if they can find any.

Sunday

We have had a message from our friends in Europe saying they will not allow us to sell any British beef anywhere in the world. But they are prepared to help us out by selling us as



much European beef as we need. "This shows how well Europe works," I told my wife Norman, "with everyone pulling in the same direction."

"Against Britain, you mean..." she said, as usual entirely missing the point. "What's for supper?" I asked her, changing the subject. "We are having veal cutlets," she said. "Oh good," I said. "That at least has nothing to do with cows."

Monday

Unfortunately our European friends have still failed to realise that I have solved the beef crisis. I have sent Mr Hogg to Brussels to make our final offer. We will slaughter all the cows in Britain, if they will pay us for it. They came back with a counter-offer that they will pay for it so long as we give them the money first. Also they will never lift the ban. Mr Hogg who is a brilliant negotiator accepted these terms in full. Tonight for supper we had something called Cheval Steak. I was so hungry after waiting all day for Mr Hogg to come back in triumph that I told Norman "I could eat a horse". "That's lucky," she said, "you just have."

Tuesday

I am not inconsiderably incandescent with rage at my friend Mr Clinton. He has apparently given a visa to Mr Blair to go to America, and has even let it be known that he will shake hands with him for the photographers. This is a real betrayal and could well put my election process in jeopardy. Dr Mawhinney, however, has come to the rescue once again, as he always does. He rushed into by office this morning waving a document and shouting "We've got him this time." It was an amazing secret document from the Daily Telegraph cuttings library showing that in 1960 Mr Blair had proposed a motion in his school debating society that "this house believes that nuclear weapons are jolly dangerous". As Dr Mawhinney explained: "This proves that Blair is a 100 per cent anti-American Soviet sympathiser. If we fax this to Clinton, Blair will probably be arrested at the airport." "Good," I told the doctor, "this will really backfire on Blair."

Wednesday

"Pathetic Major Smear on Blair Backfires" said the front page of the Daily Telegraph, getting it all wrong as usual. Still, at least they aren't going on about cows. "What is your policy on cows?" asked Norman, as she placed some ostrich rissoles from M and S into the microwave. "If you ask me, your policy is just to keep your head in the sand in the hope that the whole thing will go away." At that moment my brother Terry rang reverse-charge from Sydney, which is in Australia. "G'day, you pommie bastard," he said, "I am at the World Garden Ornament Trade Fair Gnome '96". "I am in no small measure not interested in where you are," I said. "I have the biggest crisis since the Falklands on my hands". "Are you sending in a task force to kill all the cows?" he replied. "No," I told him sternly, "they will all be incinerated in the normal manner and then thrown into the sea to be eaten by the fish." "Oh no" said Terry. "So we're all going to end up with Mad Fish Disease?". At this point I decided it was time to draw a line under Terry's phone call and I resumed my conversation with Norman instead. "I think you will find that my policy on cows *is* working," I said. "Unlike everyone in the farming industry," she replied. I decided to finish my rissoles in silence.

Thursday

My friend Mr Clarke tells me that we are going to win the by-election in Staffordshire. He has been down to the constituency and says there is definitely a feelgood factor. "They are feeling good about voting Labour," he explained, "and I felt good as soon as I got on the train home."

Mr Mawhinney said that unfortunately I was too busy to visit Staffordshire myself.

"What am I doing?" I asked him. "You are doing everything you can to help win the by-election," he said, "i.e. staying in your office.

Friday

We have done not inconsiderably very well in the by-election, easily beating the Liberal Democrats and Screamin' Lord Goldsmith. The excellent result was as follows:

Brigadier C.J.B. Trimbledon-Fyffe (Labour)	39,785
Basil Basildon (Con)	2,112
Oddjob (Screamin' Referendum)	1,136
Shirley Pencil (LibDem)	2

Swing to Labour: 110%

As you can see, the Conservatives are on their way!

Saturday

The newspapers have got the by-election entirely wrong. They are claiming that I lost, which is ridiculous! I still have one more seat than Mr Blair, so I am still the winner.

"If one man dies then the Tories are finished," said the Daily Telegraph.

"Not if that man is you," said Mr Mawhinney loyally.

Sunday

My friend Jeffrey Archer has rung me to say that his new novel has won an Oscar even though he has not written it yet. Hugh Grant has agreed to play the part of the hero, Godfrey Bowman, the millionaire novelist and statesman who has never been to Shepherds Market and certainly did not look at any faxes to his wife Mary before he bought some shares in Anglia TV for a friend.

In the story, apparently, Mr Bowman helps to save the Prime Minister, James Colonel, who is under threat from a sinister billionaire called Sir John Silversmith.

The Prime Minister is so grateful to Bowman that he resigns, appointing Godfrey as his successor.

"This is a terrific story," I told Jeffrey. "It's a pity I don't have any time to read it."

"You will," he said mysteriously.

LABOUR 'GOES BLUE' IN £10 MILLION RELAUNCH

by Our Marketing Staff
Joanna Colas

THE Labour Party has taken the most daring gamble in its 96-year history, by changing its brand identification from traditional red to a startling new blue.

Said Marketing Director Pete Mandelson, of Mandelson, Mandelson & Blair: "Extensive research has shown that

The script has changed

consumers react more positively to the colour blue than to any other.

"This is why for years the brand leader in our field has been the Tory Party, which has always been identified with blue."

Pepsi Talk

"It is all a matter of packaging," said Mr Blandelson. "The product of course remains exactly the same — mainly sugar, water, colouring, and, of course, the secret ingredient known to us as Blunkett 127."

IPFRONTERS

Continuing the hugely popular Sunday Colour Supplement you can read exclusively in every paper...

Give that man a **Patsy** on the back! Miss **Kensit**'s having a Sportsnight out with our **Des**!!! **Lynam** up, eh girl?!?

Ruby's Waxing lyrical about a new man in her life! But it's all Greek to Mr **Theodoracopulos**! Does she want him to **Taki** her home?

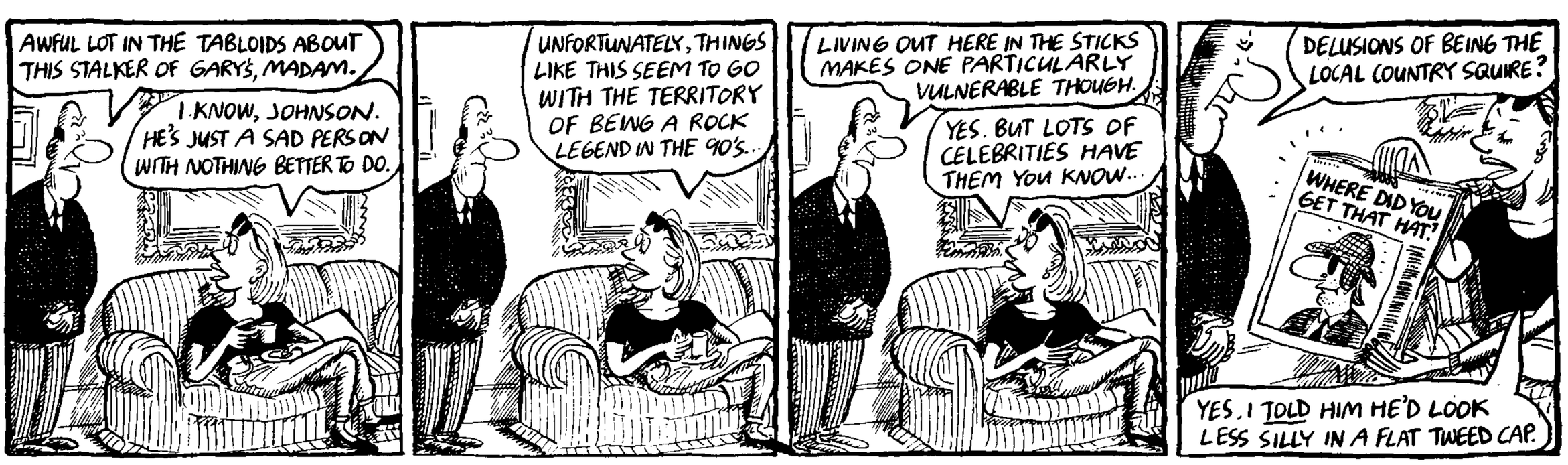
Looks like **Naomi**'s having a Knight out with Shakespearean actor **Sir Ian**!? That means **McKellen**'s in the soup! **Campbell**'s, naturally! It's all the fashion nowadays so we hope they don't get Bard with each other!

Here's some Really Useful Company for **Sir Andrew**! The girl on the left has got the gift of the **Gaby**! But Miss **Roslin**'s rival on the right knows that the **Hurley** bird catches the worm! Eh, **Liz**? But what are they talking about? The **Webber**, of course!

Hold the front **Paige**! **Caine** you believe it? Looks like **Elaine** is taking the **Michael**! Not a lot of people know that! *(You've done this thousands of times. You're fired. Ed.)*

Isn't it a **Shane**?! You won't get **Ritchie** walking about in your pyjamas! But luckily BBC's Brains Trust star **Mary Ann Sieghart** is on hand to show she's not just a clever face! *(Pathetic. You're hired again. Ed.)*

(That's enough piss-poor captions to dreary PR photos by clapped-out hacks — Ed)


AWFUL LOT IN THE TABLOIDS ABOUT THIS STALKER OF GARY'S, MADAM.
I KNOW, JOHNSON. HE'S JUST A SAD PERSON WITH NOTHING BETTER TO DO.
UNFORTUNATELY, THINGS LIKE THIS SEEM TO GO WITH THE TERRITORY OF BEING A ROCK LEGEND IN THE 90'S..
LIVING OUT HERE IN THE STICKS MAKES ONE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE THOUGH.
YES. BUT LOTS OF CELEBRITIES HAVE THEM YOU KNOW...
DELUSIONS OF BEING THE LOCAL COUNTRY SQUIRE?
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT HAT?
YES. I TOLD HIM HE'D LOOK LESS SILLY IN A FLAT TWEED CAP.

BLAIR MANIA SWEEPS US

by Our Political Staff
Alistair Campbell

THEY have known nothing like it since the Beatles!

When the young, grinning, mop-topped Labour leader stepped down from his plane, America went mad — literally!

As the crowd (Sidney J. Bonkerburger II and his wife Dorita) surged forward to catch a glimpse of their idol, Tony Blair was whisked away by one of New York's legendary yellow cabs to be plunged into an unprecedented round-the-clock publicity blitz.

Never before has any British leader been given such adulatory treatment by a normally cynical and laid-back US media.

Blur

This was the time-table of hysteria as the US went Blair-bonkers — literally!!

9.15 a.m. Blair gets top billing on Milwaukee's WXTZJ-FM Good Morning Minnesota Show, with top Midwest DJ Morton J. Cornfeed.

10.15 a.m. Blair answers questions on popular Hispanic phone-in show Buenas Dias Miami, hosted by top women DJ Christina Tequila.

3.31 p.m. Interview with best-selling Vermont listings magazine *What's On in Vermont* by top Vermont commentator Norman Vermont.

5.17 p.m. Blair has top-level meeting with President Clintstone, along with 79 other leaders of opposition parties around the globe, as part of the presidential Young Leaders of Tomorrow Programs, together with Taiwan's Hu Hee, 15, and the Suffragan Bishop of Rumbabwe, the Very Rev. Elisha Muzorewa, 96.

5.27 p.m. President greets Blair personally with the words: "Hi there, have a nice day".

7.10 p.m. Blair flies home in triumph.

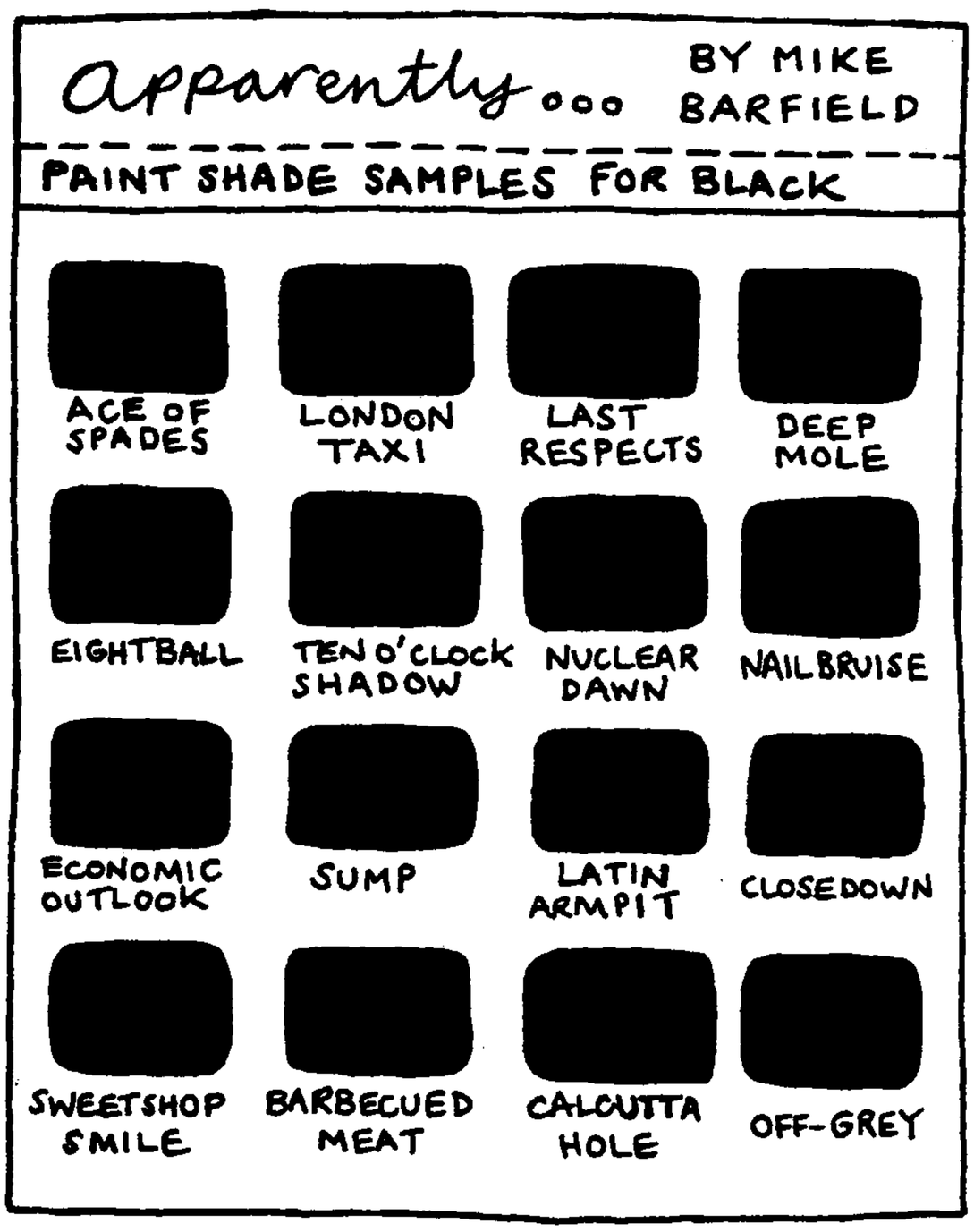
That Heseltine-Murdoch Lunch Menu in full

Whole Media Pie (for Mr Murdoch)

—*—

Er... That's it

(This menu is now available at all new Labour restaurants)



PRISON FOR ALL
Howard's Shock Pledge

by Our Crime Staff **Stanley Holloway**

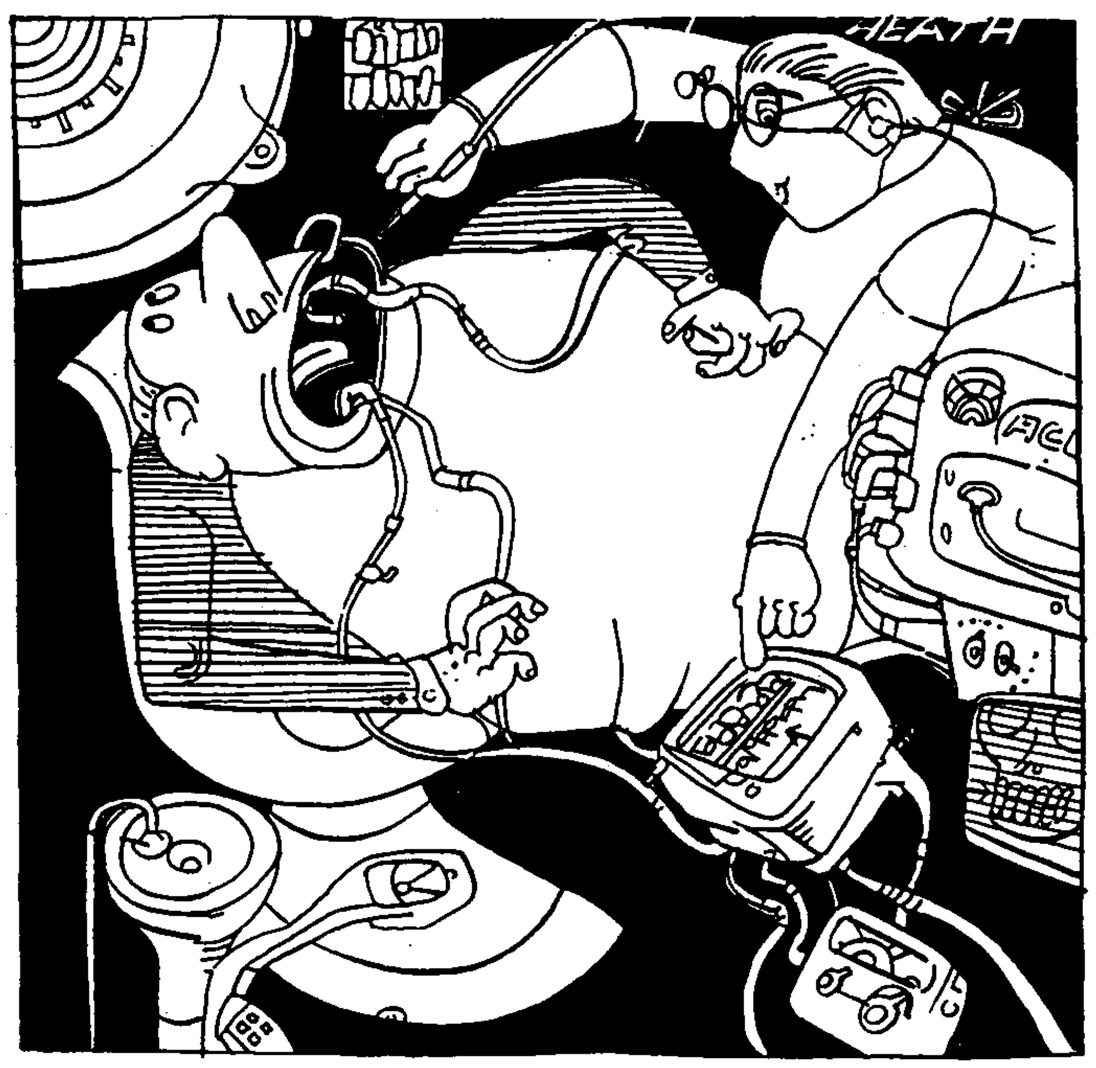
IN A bold move to stamp out all crime in Britain by the time of the next election, Home Secretary Michael Howard plans to imprison everyone in the country for an indefinite period.

"The only way to make our streets safe," said Mr Howard, "is to have nobody on them because they are all in prison.

"This means that every potential criminal in Britain," he went on, "will be safely out of harm's way."

Mr Howard's plan will involve building over 600,000 new prisons, which will be built by the prisoners themselves working in chain-gangs around the clock, thus saving the taxpayer billions

(contd p. 94)



Great Bores Of Today.

"... what we're doing here as you can see on the monitor is investigating the upper cavities with the micro-optic eye there that purple patch indicates decay which we can magnify 30 times just by pressing this little button here... by the way is this music all right? we've got quad stereo and multi-stacking CD system so you can have whatever you want Four Seasons Three Tenors the soundtrack to Il Postino that's very popular at the moment especially for those having root canal work yes it's all changed a lot since the old days this is an automatic suction pump which eliminates saliva and detritus at the point of operation I picked it up in Copenhagen at the Dental Expo '94 sorry did that hurt? it shouldn't have done Karen could you prepare some more of that Dirythmadon... this one's new it's pina colada flavour we just rub it in the gum and it freezes the nerve endings... oh dear this tooth is in a shocking state it'll have to come out pass me the pliers Karen and the piece of string..."

KNEE – 'It's Not Over'

THE SOCCER world was rocked to its foundations last night when an ashen-faced Ron Knee told reporters: "Neasden are still on course. Trust me and trust the lads. We will not let the fans down — even if they let down our tyres after the game."

His shock outburst came after Neasden FC had been dislodged from the bottom of the League table following a shock draw with AC Brent Cross.

The 0-0 draw gave Knee's Neasden their first point in 150 years and, after a whole season at the bottom, Neasden look like losing the coveted 32nd place to their North London rivals Dollis Hill.

Kevin Kneegan

Discussing the historic point, Knee exploded: "My lads were great! The media keep knocking them but they went out on the field and did their best. It just wasn't bad enough."

Neutral observers were, however, quick to excuse Knee on the grounds that AC Brent Cross fielded only one man, the 19-year-old Julian Ikea-Store. The rest of the team failed to turn up, as the result of a devastating flu virus that had swept through the club following the Easter celebrations at the Neasden Balti House

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man In The Portakabin Press Box With An Old Cadbury's Cream Egg And The Wednesday Edition Of Loot

Experience in fashionable Kwiksave Road.

They Think It's All Scripted

Neasden chairman Brigadier Buffy Cohen (of the Launderama-to-Internet-Pornography chain) said last night: "This dismal result does not affect my support for Mr Knee in the slightest. If he doesn't end up bottom of the league he'll be looking for a new club."

Ron Knee is 57.

LATE RESULT

Anglo-Innuit Charity Shield
3rd Round, 2nd Leg

Anchorage Eskimos 3
(Nanook A., Nanook B., Nanook C.)
Neasden FC 0
(Snow stopped play. Anchorage go through on away goal rule)

ADVERTISEMENT

A heartwarming fantasy in which a bunch of hopeless torys are threatened with replacement. Wooden used to be the favourite, but he is heading for a pathetic ending in the attic along with his friends Mr Potato Kenand Hez the Dinosaur.

Why? Because the amazing Buzzword Lightblair has arrived on the scene. With his new gimmicks and flashy teeth, Buzzword is soon adored by everyone. And, best of all, he thinks he is a hero!! He has no idea that he is just a Tory!

What can Wooden do?

"TO INANITY AND BEYOND"

WARNING: Most scenes in this production are unsuitable for voters over 18

'JEWS ARE ALL JEWISH'

Brando's Shock Claim

by Our Man In Hollywood
Lunchtime O'Jews

THE VETERAN Hollywood star of *The Grandmother (shurely 'Godfather'? Ed)* **last night hit out at the movie industry, claiming that it was "run by Jews, many of whom are known to be Jewish".**

Brando's claim set the film community in uproar, and they immediately issued a joint statement signed by everyone. This declared that Brando's allegations were completely unfounded.

It added: "He will never work in this town again as long as he lives, and nor will his sons and the sons of his sons and the sons of the sons of his sons. Even unto the last Brando, they shall not work."

Marlon Brando is 72 stone.

Design for new Royal Yacht

TORY FURY OVER BLAIR 'GOD VOTES LABOUR' CLAIM

by Our Religious Affairs Staff **Clifford Longford**

CONSERVATIVE MPs erupted in fury last night over a sensational claim by Labour leader Tony Blair that all Conservative voters would go to hell, especially Mrs Thatcher.

Blair's amazing outburst was printed in the Sunday Telegraph under the heading A QUESTION OF FAITH.

Shock Horror

Said Sir Bufton Tufton, Conservative MP for Lymeswold: "I haven't had time to read the article yet but, from what you say, I think Blair's views are little short of blasphemous. Am I getting paid for this? Well, in that case I won't say any more."

Tory Chairman Dr Brian Mawhinney went further in his condemnation of the Labour leader. "Blair should hang himself from the nearest tree. For a man such as him to claim that he is the Son of God is as monstrous as it is vile."

More Shock

In his article, Tony Blair wrote the following sentence:

"In my opinion, everyone is entitled to his or her beliefs. In my own case, I was led towards the Labour Party because they try to help people, which is what Jesus did."

—LETTERS—

From the Very Venerable Austin Allegro, Archdeacon of Yorkie Bar

Dear Sir,

Having read Mr Blair's moving account of Our Lord's Resurrection, I am definitely going to vote Labour at the next election.

Yours in faith,
AUSTIN METROPOLITAN,
The Deaconry,
Mars.

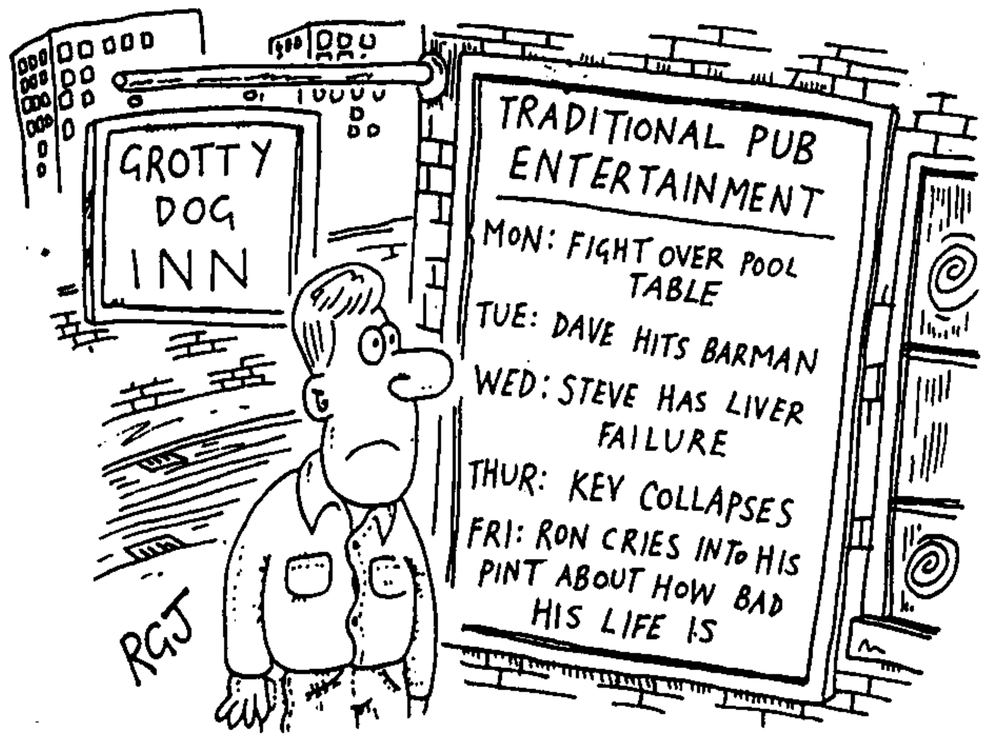
From The Baroness Thatcher KG, OM

Dear Sir,

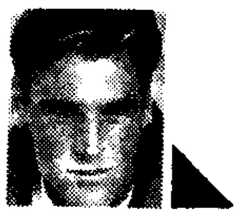
As I pointed out many times when I was Prime Minister, there is no question that God was the first Conservative, which is why he put me in Downing Street for eleven record-breaking years. I can only add that if Mr Blair gets in it can only be because he is also a Conservative, unlike this dreadful little man who has tried to destroy everything I stood for in my eleven record-breaking years as Supreme Ruler of the Universe.

Yours,
NAME AND ADDRESS
WITHHELD FOR SECURITY
REASONS.

Robin Hood and his Married Men


GROTTY DOG INN
TRADITIONAL PUB ENTERTAINMENT
MON: FIGHT OVER POOL TABLE
TUE: DAVE HITS BARMAN
WED: STEVE HAS LIVER FAILURE
THUR: KEY COLLAPSES
FRI: RON CRIES INTO HIS PINT ABOUT HOW BAD HIS LIFE IS
RGJ

PEEARRE
by Andy Callsoon



OASIS – 'YES, WE STOLE'

Top Britpop band Oasis have angrily denied their mum's shock claims that they didn't steal anything and never had.

Said lead singer Liam Gallagher and his brother Cedric: "How dare our mum lie about us to the press. OK, so we didn't nick stereos like we said last week but we *did* steal all our songs from the Beatles."

● **Remember — you read it first in Andy Callsoon's Peearre, the nation's number one recycling depot for publicity handouts.**

INFORMATION BULLETIN

THE REFERENDUM PARTY

Achtung!!!

Führerbulletin No. 79

From the Referendumbunker von Sir Jams Goldfinger

So, Mr Major-Bond, you are beginning to see sense at last.

Finally you agree to my demands for a referendum rather than face defeat and certain death at the hands of my squads of highly trained killer candidates.

But you are too late, Mr Bond.

(Walks over to banks of computers with flashing digital displays. Presses large red button marked STAFFORDSHIRE SOUTH-EAST)

You see, I have activated ze device. I, Jimmy Blofeld, ze Marmite King of the Universe!

Already my 600 candidates are in place all over Britain, hidden in huge jars of fishpaste, ready to leap out and take over when I give them ze codeword SMERSH (Smash Major's European Re-election Success Hopes). *(Goldfinger strokes white man-eating tiger on lap, the property of J. Aspinall Esq)* He is quite safe, Mr Bond. Unless he smells fear. Heh, heh, heh.

Issued by The Referendum Party of Great Britain

ARTS ROUND UP

Eyelights – Your Weekly Guide To The Best On The Arts Scene

OPERA

ROH — Nabluddigudo. Loosely based on Verdi's moving account of the 6th century BC Jewish enslavement by the Babylonians, now reset by fashionable producer Merv Gaytrouser in 1930s Fascist Albania. The Jewish women are recast as 1960s Soho strippers, the Jewish men as Big Mac sales staff, and the Babylonians as members of Himmler's SS. In the final climax, Gaytrouser unleashes thousands of plastic fish onto the stage to symbolise the exodus of the audience *(shurely 'Jews'?)*.

Boo rating: 5

STAGE

RSC — They Flew To Bruges. The classic 1949 black-and-white cine-masterpiece transferred for no reason into a deeply moving stage version. The original Michael Redgrave role of the pilot who had a nervous breakdown on his last bombing mission over the strategic Belgian city is taken by TV's John Thaw. Five hours long, the play moves slowly towards the moving climax of a totally empty theatre somewhere in the Barbican.

Boo rating: 9

SCULPTURE

Gateway to Gateshead — imaginative £800 billion project, co-funded by the National Lottery and the EU, to build a 2,000-foot-high stainless steel statue of Lord Gowrie by the side of the A4361 near Gateshead. Local artist Kev Grotty, 32, whose only previous work was an 800-foot-high statue of a loaf of bread made out of Yorkie Bars and rubber tyres, says: "My angel will be a huge success. Motorists passing Gateshead will look up at it and immediately crash into each other, thus providing me with the raw material for my next masterpiece — a pile of smashed vehicles over 6,000 feet high to celebrate the Millennium."

AUTUMN BOOKS

Cluedo by the Venerable Barg. Barg takes us back to the Britain of the Dark Ages, when one man kept the flickering flame of civilisation alight. He is St Bargus, a humble Cumbrian shepherd boy, who leaves his hillside home and voyages to Londinium.

Here every Monday morning he ventures deep into the bowels of the earth and meets a little cell of acolytes in a cave.

On the Lord's Day he crosses the river and ascends into the sacred tower of the South Bank where he again communes with some of the wisest men of the time — Dr Jonathan the Miller, Dennis the Plodder and the one known as Sting.

Bags of sex and violence — what the Dark Ages of the 1990s were all about.

Beethoven's Erotica by Jolly Sooper. Jolly goes behind the scenes of one of the world's great orchestras. Sadly she finds nothing very interesting, so she writes a novel about sex instead. Featuring the raunchy Amsterdam Concertgebonk, directed by Herbert von Karryonbonking, the story lasts 67,000 pages and has bags of sex and violins.

My Very Interesting Life Vol. 94 by Anthony Powell. The greatest living novelist tries to remember what he had for lunch to fill up his new diary. Sadly lacking in sex and violence, but awfully good on wine. Sample entry: "July 4th 1983. Luncheon: soup, followed by fish, some meat and a pudding of sorts. Very edible. We drank five bottles of a very adequate Lebanese Riesling from a new shop in Frome called Oddbins. After lunch I fell asleep and dreamed I was the greatest novelist who ever lived. Woke up and found that it was true."

TO BE READ IN ALL CHURCHES

The Epistle of Paul to The Telegraphians

1. I Paul, son of John, to followers of the Daily Telegraph, greetings.

2. I have received word that your young men and maidens are behaving foolishly, licentiously and without any reverence for their elders.

3. For they take no delight in the ways of wisdom, seeking only the vain and idle pleasures of the moment — viz. watching the television and reading Viz.

4. And their ears are filled with clashing cymbals, tabors and the sound of wailing, which is called Brit-pop.

5. And upon their heads they wear caps which are turn-ed even in the wrong directions, so that the peak faceth unto the rear and vice versa.

6. And when it cometh unto vice, they are sated with every lust of the flesh, from fornication even unto the taking of the Ecstasy.

7. And I say: Woe unto you, ye generation of vipers for your days shall be numbered.

8. For behold there shall come a time, which is not long now, when the whole world shall be plunged into chaos and darkness.

9. And this shall come to pass for one reason only. Namely that these young persons have not hearkened unto the wisdom of myself.

10. Is-eth this enough?

TOMORROW: The Epistle of Paul to the Daily Mailians.

GLENDA SLAGG

***The Gal with the Cellnet on her Thighs* (shurely shome mishtake? Ed)**

Marilyn Monroe

■ **PRINCESS DI?!?! Don'tchaluv-her?! At least she's human like the rest of us!?! Alright, so she's got thighs that look like lumpy semolina?!? Who hasn't!? At least she's not frightened to show them off to the paparazzi! Gawd bless you, Lady Thigh! You're one of us under the skin! (Geddit?)**

☐ PRINCESS DI?!? Don'tshejust-makeyasick?!! With all her money she STILL has legs like an elephant's! Blimey!! Get yourself smartened up, ducks, before we all throw up at the sight of you?!? Pardon me while I puke, Ma'am!?! Cell-U-Like? No we don't?!! (Geddit?)

● *HATS off to plucky Carol Thatcher?!? She's not ashamed to tell the world her dad's a wino and her mum's mad!?!? Good on yer, Carol — you're a credit to the Thatcher family!?!?*

■ **CAROL THATCHER?!! What a disgrace?! What's happened to family loyalty when even your own daughter is so desperate for money that she has to write a seedy kiss 'n' tell book saying that you're a wino and your wife's mad!?! Clear off, Carol, and take your 30 pieces of silver with you!?!? Leave the fiction writing to Jeffrey Archer?!?**

☐ HERE they are — Glenda's Mad Cowboys!?!

DOUGLAS HOGG. With his fedora hat and his silly glasses, I'd go the whole Hogg with him anyday!! M-m-m-ooo!! Here's one old cow that's mad about you!?!

MIKE TYSON. So Frank Bruno's not the only one he can't keep his hands off!?!

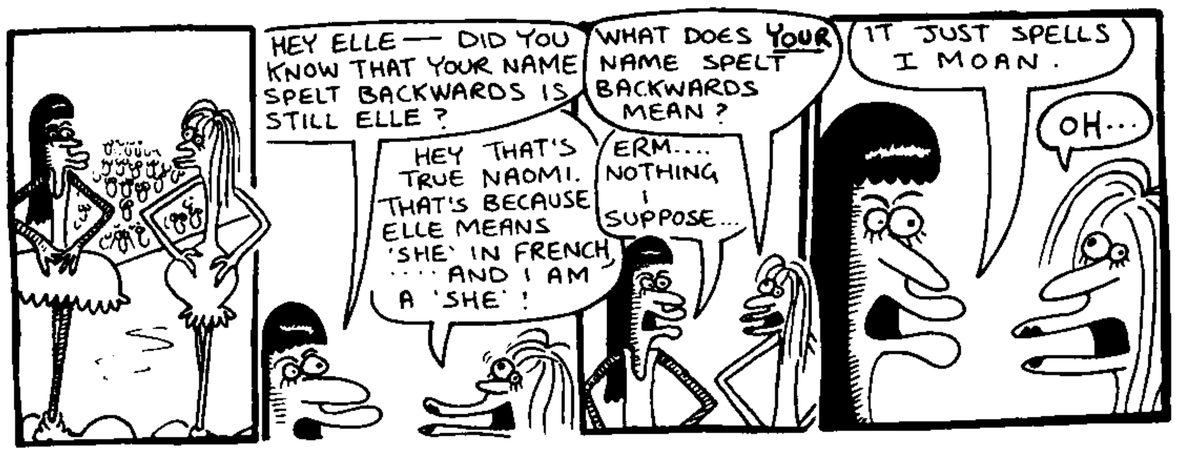
WILL HUTTON. He's this month's Editor of the Observer!? I hear he's pretty good in the sack!!? (Geddit?)

GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE. Crazy name, crazy guy!!!?!

Byeeeeee!

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


HEY ELLE — DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR NAME SPELT BACKWARDS IS STILL ELLE ?
WHAT DOES YOUR NAME SPELT BACKWARDS MEAN ?
IT JUST SPELLS I MOAN.
HEY THAT'S TRUE NAOMI. THAT'S BECAUSE ELLE MEANS 'SHE' IN FRENCH ..... AND I AM A 'SHE' !
ERM.... NOTHING I SUPPOSE...
OH...

DIARY

So I'd had a few, so fookin what? People only know what they read about in the press. So they think we're fookin foul-mouthed hooligans, swearing and picking fights and that. But it's all fookin crap, it is. My trouble is I'm too honest and various stook-up bastards in the industry don't like that. Like, Liam and me met Yehudi fookin Menuhin — what kind of a fookin name is that? — the other night and I said to him, I said: "You're a right fookin miserable bastard, aren't you, Menuhin? And what's that when it's at home?"

See, he had this sort of thing, looked like a kinda pervy little guitar, played it on his shoulder all dainty like with this kinda rod. So our kid Liam, he was really wound up. Really wound up, he was, was our Liam. And smashed out of his head. So our kid says to Menuhin: "What do you call them titchy little poxy guitars, then, you right fookin miserable bastard?"

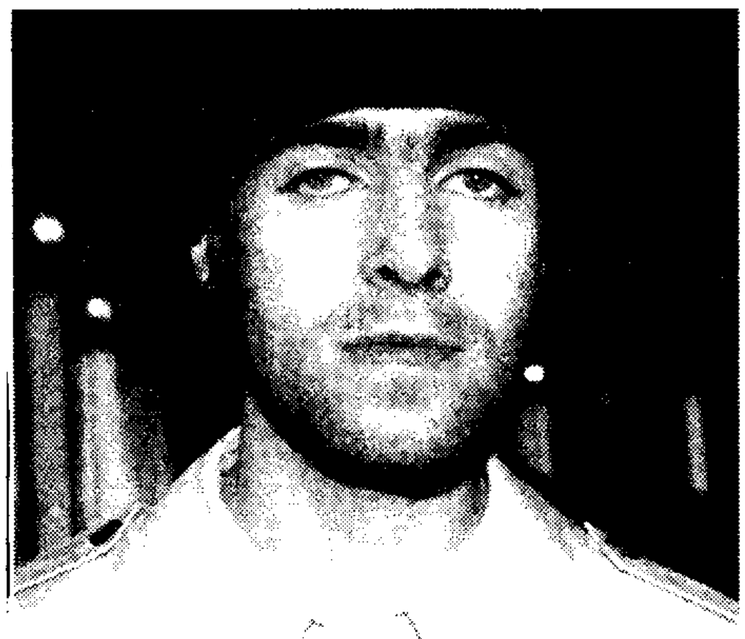
"Violins," says Menuhin, all old like.

"If you want fookin violence, mate, I'll give you fookin violence says our kid Liam and bottles him one on his conk.

Serves the tosser right, cheeky fookin bastard. Yehudi fookin Menuhin? What a has-fookin-been. Bet you what you want he never won a Brit or went out with Patsy Kensit, know what I mean, like?

Talkin' 'bout Patsy, our kid Liam won the Patsy Award this year, not bad goin', our kid. Liam put on his outdoor gear and went up to collect his Patsy in a televised fookin ceremony in front of all these stook-up tossers, like he was really wound up by them. But there was all these other rock stars queuing up for their Patsy, and that really wound him fookin up, so he starts swearin' and smashin' the place up an' that. Now he's returned his Patsy in disgust, as a gesture against all those other fookin blokes who've had one. So I gets my genius to thinkin about this and I've come up with this fookin great song, best fookin song in the whole history of the world ever. It's called "Patsy" and it goes like this:

Yeeaaah, Patsy
Don't be nasty
You're bein' hasty



NOEL GALLAGHER

Treatin' me like a rat — see?
That would be ghastly
Yeaaaah, Patsy
You're lookin' pasty
Have some more pastry
Don't go astray
On me, Pat-seeeeee!

Fookin genius, and all to a tune just like Lady Madonna, but with fewer chords. And you can tell it's a great fookin song because like if you look at the last words in every line they fookin ***rhyme***, see? And next year I'm gonna be up for a Patsy myself, 'cos unlike our kid Liam I'm fookin ***sophistercated***.

We're fookin wild we are. Fookin wild. Like we clocked into a fookin hotel, big swanky fookin place, know what I mean? and Liam, he's like really wound up now, he just goes over to the mini-bar and pulls the door open and swigs back a fookin mini-vodka. And now he's smashed, really smashed and he goes over to the phone and hives it a bit of stick, know what I mean, like he dials all these numbers on it and gets our Mam on the end, just like he owned the fookin place. Then after he'd put the phone down — really put it down on the table provided, like really showin it who's fookin boss — he moves on to the shower. Jeez, what the fook you gonna do with that shower, Liam? I say, but he's so wound up he doesn't fookin listen, he just presses a lever and — whoosh! — all this fookin water splooshes out. Then he grabs the Silvi-fookin-Krin and gives his hair a bit of stick with it and rinses it fookin TWICE! And that's not all. After he's shown the shower who's boss, he grabs the fookin hair-drier and switches it on and blow-fookin-dries his hair like some kinda caged tiger. Christ, Liam, I say — arentcha gonna pick up that towel now? Cos he's left the towel any-fookin-old-how on the floor. Too fookin right I am, mate, he says, and folds it really aggressively and shoves it on the towel-rail. That'll show 'em we're not just a coupla working-class Mancie kids who don't know our fookin manners, says Liam. Too fookin right it will, I say..

And working-class is what we are, and we're not gonna betray our fookin roots like some other tosser so-called fookin rock stars I could mention. Like, when I got my Rolls fookin Royce I insisted, fookin ***insisted***, it were brown, 'cos brown is the colour of the fookin soil, and the Northern working-classes are men of soil, or should that be toil? Crikey, feels like a fookin brilliant song's coming, to roughly the tune of Strawberry Fields, but with a few less notes, know what I mean:

Yeaaah, we're men of toil
Close to the fookin soil
Gotta lance my boil
I love Joill,
She's my latest goil
Take her out for a moil
Yeaaah, she's my wonderwoill.

Genius. And with that song I'm gonna buy a second brown Rolls fookin Royce, this time on behalf of all our ordinary working-class fans who are the only people we care about in this industry, so then they can look at me and Liam as we get driven down their street and they can say, "Fook me, good old Noel's bought that fookin Rolls just for us — he certainly hasn't betrayed his fookin origins." But they'd better not come too near or they might scratch the fookin paintwork and then Liam'll give 'em one, and we'll get our fookin lawyers onto them, know what I mean...

Rich Pratt and Family

From Rich Pratt's election manifesto, Fort Lauderdale, USA

12.00 FILM: HAPPY TOGETHER (1990) Patrick Dempsey, Helen Slater, Dan Schneider, Marius Weyers. Frantic college comedy about mismatched students sharing the same campus room. tina O'Done; and Theresa Gorman MP. 4848518958713

Sun

Literary Review

Homily sweet homily

It Takes A Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us
Hillary Rodham Clinton
(Simon & Schuster, £12.99)

EVER since the young George Washington bravely informed his dad that he could not tell a lie, the Americans have had a thing about kids. A deeply sentimental and sanctimonious thing, too.

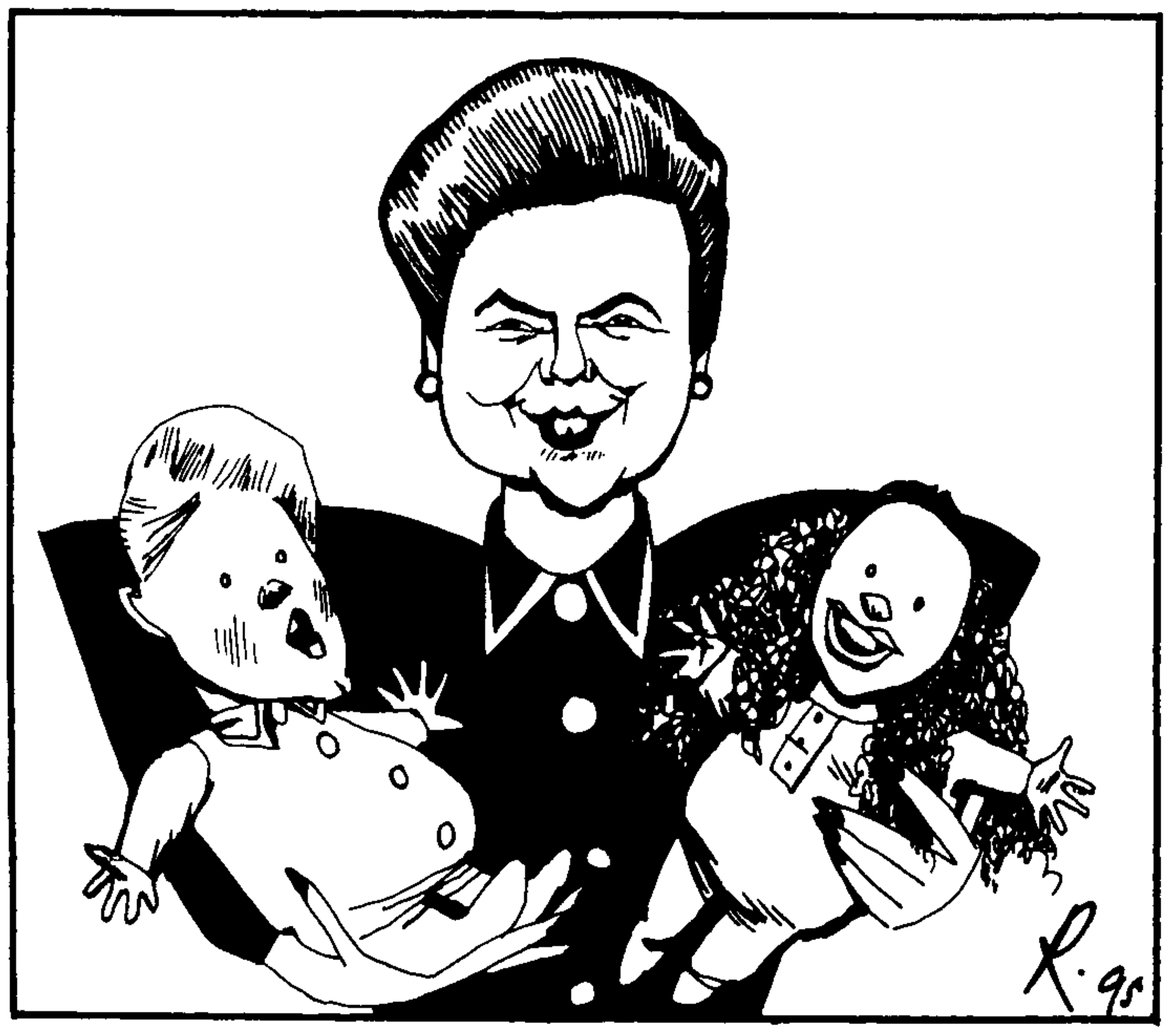
As you might expect, the president's wife is no exception. "When Chelsea Victoria Clinton lay in my arms for the first time," she proudly discloses, "I was overwhelmed by the love and responsibility I felt for her."

Bill did his bit, of course: went to expectant fathers' classes and laid in sacks of ice for Hillary to chew on in a labour, whose outcome was — you guessed it — "the greatest gift of joy — and humility — any parent could hope for."

What inspired this dinky little collection of cracker mottoes on childcare? Well, it's election year, in case you hadn't noticed, and practically every one of the first lady's homilies on infant development have some readily decodable subtext.

As you might imagine, the president's wife doesn't want her daughter "to grow up in an America sharply divided by income, race or religion... I want her to believe, as her father and I did, that the American Dream is within reach of anyone willing to work hard and take responsibility."

And yes, Bill's doing his best beneath this lash of exhortation. Too many butterball tinies loafing round the schoolyard? Something called the president's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports will sort them out.



Worried about law enforcement? Twenty five thousand new cops are being trained as we speak. Want more choice in education? Hold it right there while I call the president's Charter School Initiative, buddy boy.

And so on. Of course, astute politician that she is, Hillary realises that you have to be careful in an exercise like this. If democracy means anything on the other side of the pond it means not offending anyone, and so each shred of social criticism is quickly cancelled out by the other side's point of view. Divorce is bad, but then "I am not saying there are not reasons for divorce." Want to stop the kids turning into couch potatoes? "For a start, turn off the TV, VCR and computer, get up, and get going..." But then, ah, maybe technology isn't such a bad thing after all.

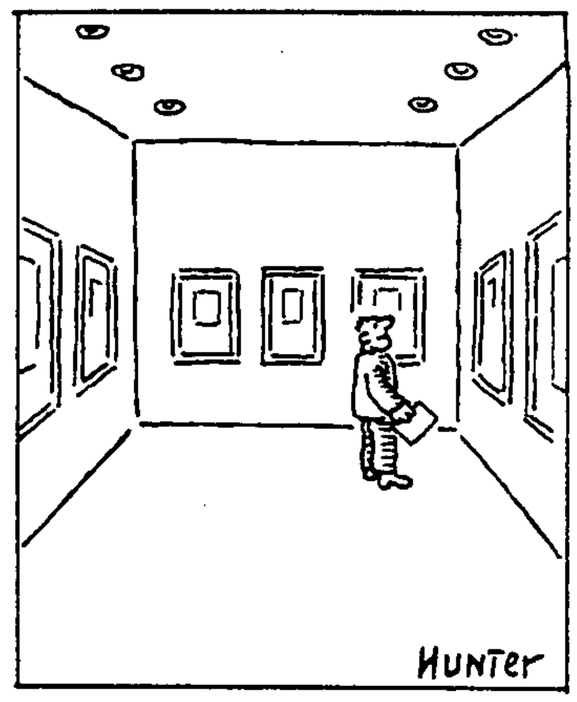
Point. Counterpoint. Fudge. It will have become apparent by now that *It Takes A Village* (title from an African proverb, natch) is a work of quite staggering obviousness and banality. "The majority of adults and teenagers, who do not drink to excess or smoke, can go a long way towards safeguarding their long-term health through diet and physical activity," Mrs C writes luminously at one point. You trust she shared this conclusion with the Surgeon General.

Then there are the expert witnesses, brought in at every conceivable juncture. As senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was warned... As science writer Ronald Kotulak explained... "Playing is the learning of child development" says Dr T. Berry Brazelton...

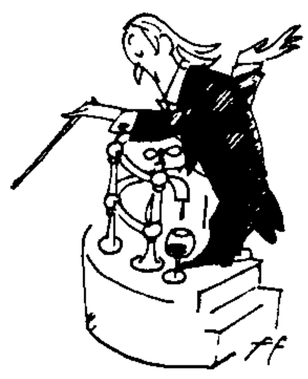
All at once the first lady's stylistic model becomes plain: the fragments of homely "wisdom"; the aw-shucks-ma laughter is the best medicine ("Think of a baby like a football," advises an ex-footballer, "and hold it tight"); Dr T. Berry Brazelton and his egg-headed encapsulations of the bleeding obvious — what we have here, in fact, is a parody of the *Reader's Digest* so consummate in its execution — all Mrs Clinton excludes is the "Twenty Ways To Increase Your Wordpower" — that you wonder why the publishers didn't sue.

Hope... Opportunity... My husband... Votes... One sympathises with Mrs Clinton, who is by all accounts an intelligent woman and must have flinched from compiling this effortful drivel. The knowledge that she has written a kind of comic masterpiece by default will be scant consolation. Meanwhile the implications for our own political arena are too awful to contemplate. I mean, what price *Kids — They're Fab* by Cherie Blair; or Norma Major's *Children: A Sacred Trust* in the run-up to the election?

PRIVATE VIEW



PUBLIC VIEW



ARTS NEWS

AFTER the national lottery fund's rejection of the plan for a new Welsh Opera House at the centre of the Cardiff Bay development, Sir Keith Stuart, chairman of Associated British Ports (ABP), is a desperate man.

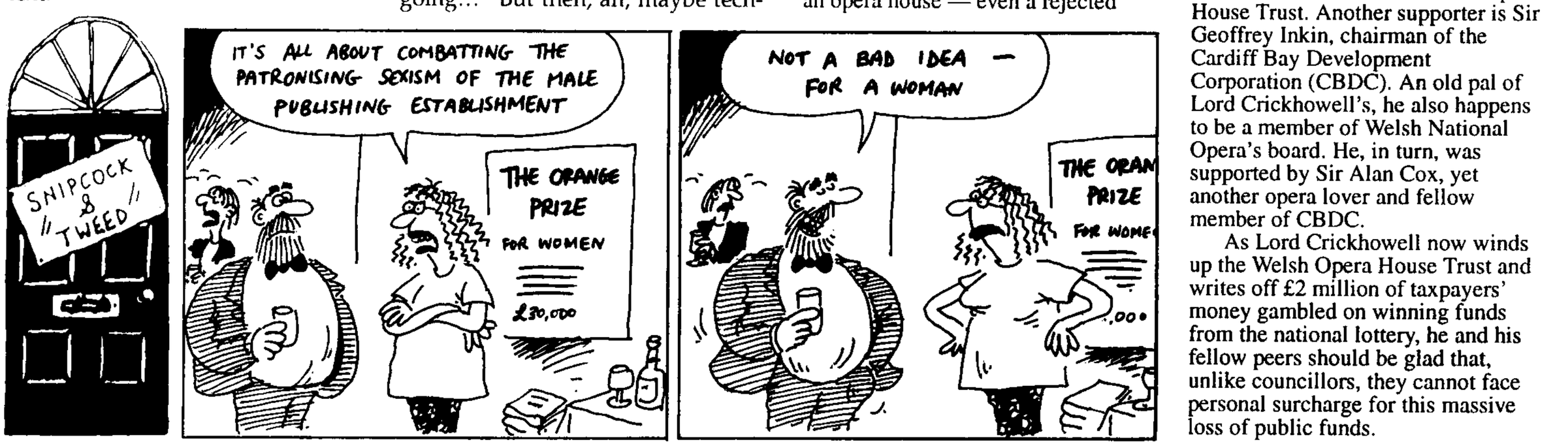
He is still promoting *any* ideas for an opera house — even a rejected design like the one for the Tower Bridge theatre, which London planners felt looked like a shed. At £20 million it can at least be said to be relatively cheap: the lottery fund will only consider a renewed application for under £50 million.

Stuart's desperation is understandable as the opera house was to have been the showpiece of Cardiff Bay, a development largely owned by the ABP. That scheme's costs have spiralled from £120 million to £190 million of public money, and the loss of the opera house would be the final straw.

Why an opera house was chosen as the centrepiece has always been unclear. Welsh National Opera only ever attracts an audience of 800, yet its new building would have had 1,750 seats. The explanation for the madcap scheme lies in Sir Keith's associates.

They include fellow ABP director Lord Crickhowell, the former Welsh secretary who first proposed an opera house. Crickhowell was a director of Welsh National Opera and recently became chairman of the Welsh Opera House Trust. Another supporter is Sir Geoffrey Inkin, chairman of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation (CBDC). An old pal of Lord Crickhowell's, he also happens to be a member of Welsh National Opera's board. He, in turn, was supported by Sir Alan Cox, yet another opera lover and fellow member of CBDC.

As Lord Crickhowell now winds up the Welsh Opera House Trust and writes off £2 million of taxpayers' money gambled on winning funds from the national lottery, he and his fellow peers should be glad that, unlike councillors, they cannot face personal surcharge for this massive loss of public funds.



footnotes

HOME OF ABUSE: Bryn Estyn, Wrexham

The great Clwyd cover-up

SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN

If you want to understand the full extent of the cover-up of the child abuse scandal in North Wales (see last *Eye*), go back to a public statement on 7 September 1992 from Gwilym Jones, parliamentary under-secretary at the Welsh office.

He was, he said, "responding" to the call by the North Wales chief constable for a full public inquiry into the allegations that a ring of paedophiles had been systematically abusing children in care for two decades.

Mr Jones said this: "In view of the great public debate and on current information I have concluded that a public inquiry is necessary to consider the matter fully. Of course, this cannot take place until the police investigations, and any proceedings, have been completed."

"A public inquiry is necessary". That was the considered conclusion of the Welsh office. Four years later, all the police inquiries in North Wales have been completed. No fewer than 300 cases were sent by police to the crown prosecution service (CPS). Only eight of these ever reached the courts. The convictions of care officers and directors of children's homes which followed, however, enlarged the scandal to huge proportions.

Clwyd county council, which was responsible for some of the tainted homes, set up a private inquiry by a panel of three chaired by John Jillings, former head of Derbyshire county council social services, and two distinguished academics in the field of child care. The panel recently delivered their report. It exposed "appalling" child abuse throughout North Wales homes and hinted at evidence of an active paedophile ring. Jillings and his colleagues concluded in the strongest possible terms that there should be a public inquiry into the whole mess.

The Jillings report has been suppressed by lawyers for the council's insurers, who have told the council they will not pay out for any libel or compensation costs if the report is published. The council has complied. The Welsh office and the police who have copies of the report are doing nothing to make it public. This blatant censorship has enormously increased the "public disquiet" which three and a half years ago caused under secretary Gwilym Jones to conclude that a public inquiry was "necessary".

What did the government do? In May last year, long before Jillings reported, Welsh secretary John Redwood announced that he was setting up a secret inquiry under one person, a London barrister, born and educated in South Wales, Nicola Davies QC. She studied the papers in the criminal cases. She did not interview anyone. When Alison Taylor, a former social worker who was sacked from one of the homes when she tried to curb the abuse, tried to talk to the barrister, she was rebuffed. Davies herself later admitted that "only limited means were available to me to test the strength of the allegations in the police documents other than those admitted or proved in the course of the prosecutions".

SACKED: Alison Taylor

The result was announced on 11 December — at the same time that Mr Jillings and his colleagues were completing their report. Rod Richards, who had taken over the health portfolio at the Welsh office from Gwilym Jones, announced triumphantly: "Miss Davies has not recommended a public inquiry. In her view an inquiry into the events before 1989 would be primarily of historical interest." Instead of a public inquiry, Davies recommended, and Richards accepted, another private "examination" of procedures by a former social services director at Birmingham, Adrianne Jones.

TWO MINISTERS, TWO OPINIONS: Gwilym Jones MP and Rod Richards MP:

When Labour MPs, councillors and child care workers throughout Wales demanded a public inquiry, Richards publicly mocked the Jillings investigation and challenged Labour MPs (who have not got the report) to place a copy of it in the Commons library. He himself, of course, could put his copy there, but he will not do so. "We have fulfilled our duty," he concluded, adding, with a characteristic linguistic flourish: "No stone will be left unturned" (*Liverpool Post*, 10 April).

The Jillings inquiry comes to a completely different conclusion to that of Nicola Davies. The problem, it insists, is not just one of the past, but of the present and future. Their conclusion gets powerful support almost every month as more and more convictions for child abuse are recorded in courts in adjoining areas where the evidence and the accused have connections with North Wales.

In the recent convictions of Alan Langshaw, former head of the Catholic social services department in Liverpool (10 years for a string of indecency charges against children in care), Dennis Grain (seven years for buggery and indecent assault against children in care, mainly in Cheshire), and Edward Stanton (13 years for widespread abuse of children in his care at St Vincent's Community Home in Formby), it emerged that all had connections with North Wales.

What is the real reason for Richards' complacency? Can it be due to his usual reactionary stridency? Or is it just plain old fashioned cover-up?

Beaks of the Week

Mr E.K. Chadwick JP and Mrs W.V. Dyke JP, Oldbury, West Midlands

SATNAM SINGH, a single parent in Smethwick, has been trying for three years to pay back heavy poll tax arrears. Oldbury magistrates threatened him with prison, so he starved and scraped and managed to pay half the £500 he owed. But he missed the deadline set by the bench, so on 5 February Mr Chadwick and Mrs Dyke sentenced him in his absence to 90 days in jail.

Mr Singh rushed in panic to the citizen's advice bureau, which put him in touch with Richard Wise, a Stoke lawyer. One telephone call was enough for the magistrates to concede that their sentence was entirely wrong and illegal, and it was quashed.

This news caused delight at West Bromwich police station where a woman police officer revealed that there were "hundreds of cases of people sent to prison in identical circumstances" in the area.

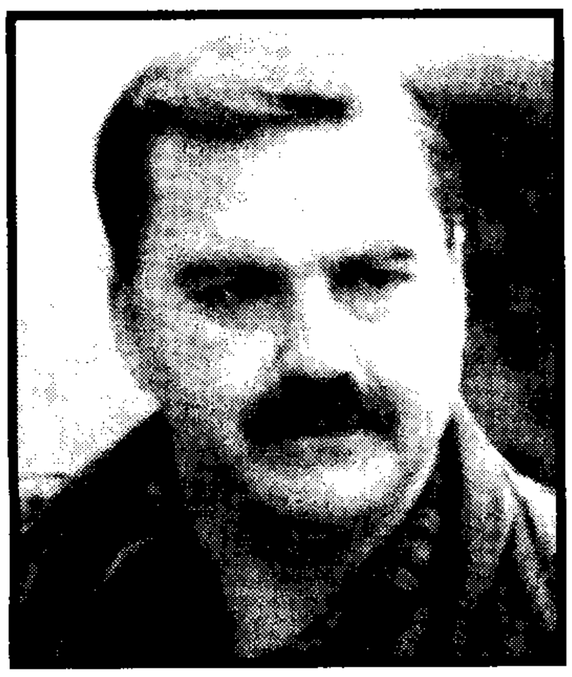
Cornhill pests

■ A TYPICAL story of getting rich quick by enterprise and initiative in the 1980s ended at Nottingham crown court last month when former Grimsby fireman Dave Hollingsworth was sent to prison for two and a half years for breaches of the financial services act.

He and three colleagues in the Grimsby fire service, who were also convicted, had set up a property investment scheme which went bust in 1991 owing investors £2.3 million.

Although the four convicted men were all representatives of Cornhill Insurance, the prestigious insurance company which subsidises England Test matches; and although they were trained, inspected and monitored by Cornhill; and although Cornhill benefited hugely from the firemen's sale of their products, there was no one in the dock from Cornhill.

The firemen, who formed a company called Daglen Properties, persuaded some 200 householders in Humberside to remortgage their homes and take out new endowment policies with Cornhill so they could "invest" in an absurdly-hyped property portfolio which had no prospect of success. When the scheme sunk in inevitable disaster, many of the 200 were left with debts they couldn't repay and lost their homes.



JAILED: Dave Hollingsworth

Cornhill refuses to pay compensation for any of the losses on the property investment scheme and its City lawyers, Beachcroft Stanleys, are engaged in a long tussle with the insurance ombudsman to try to stop him investigating the Grimsby-Daglen scandal. When the *Eye* asked Cornhill why it wasn't paying up, it replied as follows:

1. "Daglen Properties and Daglen Securities were Appointed Representatives of Cornhill... and were therefore authorised to sell Cornhill investment products."

But the men were firemen, whose terms of service prevent "moonlighting" for more than two hours a week.

2. The firemen were "given full training in relation to the products".

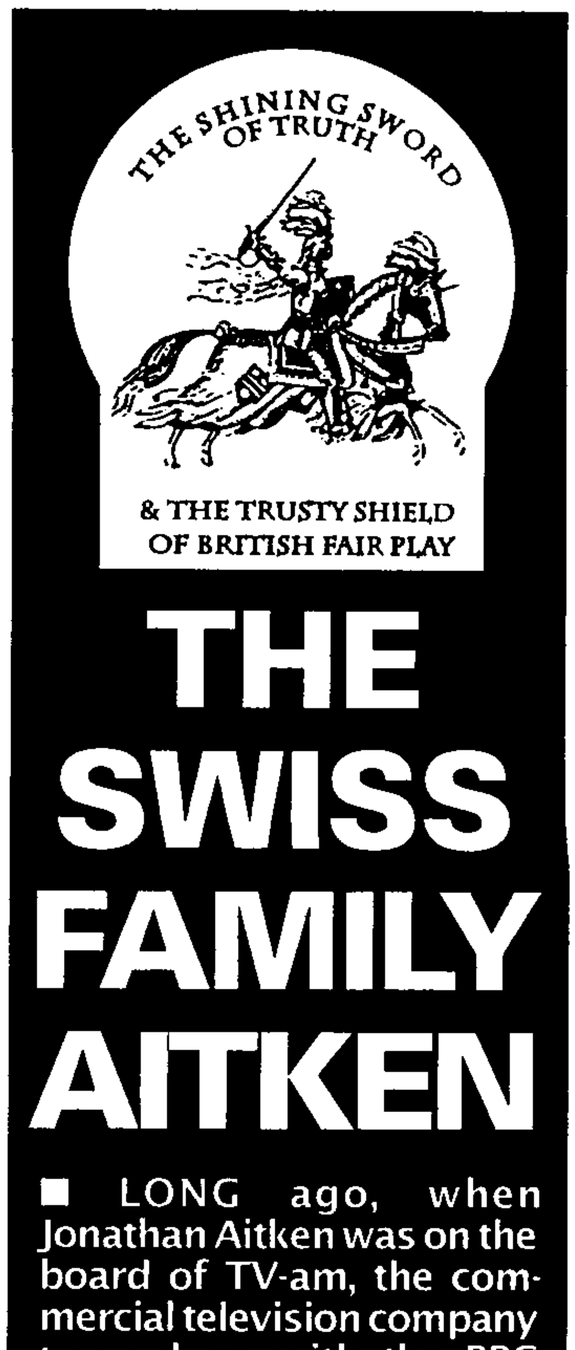
But in court, Stephen Rhodes, one of the firemen given Cornhill's "full training", revealed that the alleged training was "an absolute farce". He explained that the answers to the written tests were left lying around when the invigilator pointedly left the room.

3. "Cornhill was unaware of any 'scheme' being operated by Daglen until late 1990... This scheme had never been disclosed to Cornhill and had not been connected with or authorised by Cornhill."

But in court Stephen Rhodes told a very different story. "Cornhill knew what Daglen was doing through Peter Compston, their compliance officer," he said. "For him to not know what was going on he would have had to sit in a filing cabinet with earplugs in. I was told that at one point Daglen had the second highest turnover for Cornhill."

Compliance officer Compston said in a statement to police that he had considered opening a Daglen office on Hollingsworth's behalf (company car and expenses thrown in).

PS: In 1994 Cornhill was fined £150,000 by its regulator, LAUTRO. Neither LAUTRO nor its successor the PIA will say whether the fine was connected to the Grimsby firemen's scam.



THE SWISS FAMILY AITKEN

■ LONG ago, when Jonathan Aitken was on the board of TV-am, the commercial television company teamed up with the BBC for a project called "Operation Follow Through".

The total funding was about £300,000, and a cheque for £12,000 drawn on the joint account was paid to Comesta, a Swiss company based in Geneva. Its sole director and shareholder since 1969 was, and is, Lolicia Olivia Aitken, the Swiss wife of Jonathan Aitken MP.

Strangely, Mrs Aitken's controlling stake in Comesta has never been declared in the MPs' register of interests, which requires MPs to declare "shareholdings in which the interest is held by or on behalf of the member's spouse".

The Parfitt ending

■ WHEN *Eye* 848 dared to suggest that there might be an awkward conflict of interest between the paid consultancy with Eurotunnel then held by Mr Tim Rathbone, Tory MP for Newhaven, and the town's dependence on the ferry service to Dieppe, in came a furious letter from a Mr Peter Parfitt-King (*Eye* 850).

Mr Parfitt-King pointed out that "Tim" (his MP) would know much more about the threat of competition from the ferry if he were on the board of the tunnel company. "By all means," the letter concluded, "knock corrupt politicians, but leave the decent ones alone."

Curiously Mr Parfitt-King forgot to disclose his own interest— as a corrupt politician. At that time he was a Tory councillor in the parish of Kingston and chairman of the local branch of the Tory association. At Lewes crown court last month he was jailed for 21 months for obtaining £2,000 in benefit from the DSS. He asked for 66 charges of forgery and deception to be taken into account. He'd conned one of his victims on the doorstep while canvassing for the Tory party.

Scamelot: 3

■ A HUGE pack of glossy bumph comes in to the *Eye* editor with a letter signed by David Rigg (*sic*), director of communications at Camelot, the private monopoly which runs the national lottery.

The pack includes a booklet entitled *The National Lottery— Media Comment*. Its 22 press articles play varying tunes to the theme that the lottery is the most wonderful thing in the history of the world. No pieces from the *Eye*. Nor any reference to the fact that Camelot in its 73 weeks has invested £49.5 million and "retained" £544 million.

Stagecoach 0, BBC 1

■ THE commitment of the new private bus-and-rail monopoly Stagecoach to energetic public relations was tested to the limit by a Scottish BBC programme in May last year which had the gall to criticise Stagecoach's swashbuckling treatment of competitors.

Forewarned of the programme by the BBC's questions, Stagecoach hired Jack Irvine, the former Scottish editor of the *Sun* who is now chief executive of Media House, one of the fashionable new breed of aggressive PR companies.

Plaintive letters were sent to John McKormick, the BBC's Scottish controller, and to the Rev Norman Drummond, the BBC's national governor for Scotland. Stagecoach executives advised Scottish traffic commissioner Michael Betts not to take part in the programme, and opposition transport spokesman Henry Macleish was reminded of the Stagecoach subsidy to Fife regional council.

When the programme went out, Stagecoach took out full-page press advertisements to denounce the BBC and the small production company which made the programme for "bias" and to proclaim that Stagecoach would take them both to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. The loudest complaint was that the programme had "invaded privacy" by referring to Stagecoach founders Brian Souter and Ann Gloag as members of the Church of the Nazarene.

DERAILED: ANN GLOAG and BRIAN SOUTER

The BBC stood by its story and the complaints commission duly called for written evidence from both sides. On 18 February this year, Jack Irvine wrote to the commission that his clients were "fully occupied by rail privatisation" and so "have neither the time nor the inclination to enter into further correspondence". On 21 March the commission decided "formally to discontinue consideration" of the complaint. The matter was dropped.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

THE iron law of investment is: if the Lord did not mean investors to be sheared, He would not have made them sheep — or, for that matter, ostriches.

Such is the message from the inevitable collapse of the exotically incredible Ostrich Farming Corporation (OFC). OFC's demise (ahead of schedule) is thanks to the Department of Timidity and Inaction which has defied its reputation by moving to wind up the company.

This made it very much Bad Friday for the several thousand investors who appear to have stuck their heads in the sand and handed over up to £18,000 to buy their very own ostrich on the promised bonanza offered by the switch to healthy ostrich meat from beef, plus assorted other high value products.

Powered by fears about BSE and overexcited greedy glands, it would appear that millions may have poured into OFC since the DTI began secretly investigating the Mansfield purveyors of "the meat for the next millennium" last November. Appropriately, it has now been joined by the Serious Farce Office.

But how was such an obvious scam possible? How did such an overhyped investment in flightless birds, which slipped through regulatory loopholes and offered no compensation scheme protection to victims, get off the ground? Step forward large sections of the press, who were only too happy to accept bigger and grander advertisements even after questions had been raised, not only about breeding ostriches as an investment but OFC in particular.

Just as bank robbers follow the advice of legendary American heist expert Willie Sutton and rob banks because "that's where the money is", so the conman goes fishing for fools among the columns of the newspapers read by the wannabe rich. As the DTI went to work in November, so OFC ads featured regularly in newspapers like the *Sunset Times* and the *Sunday Depress* posing the pertinent question: "Why on earth do I want to own an ostrich?". They were joined by the *Observer* and a number of daily newspapers.

The ad campaign picked up pace into March — just as the DTI was preparing to close the show down. Last month saw large ads in the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Sunset Times* and *Sunday Depress*. Furthermore these and other ostrich fanciers like the *Observer* were also busy carrying advertisements for OFC's rivals such as Pinstripe Farming, World Ostrich Farms and the Ostrich Centre, some of which make claims even more exaggerated than OFC-returns of more than 100 percent a year!

Not surprisingly none of these newspapers, which devote pages to investment advice, issued any wealth warnings. But then how could they and take the ostrich shilling at the same time? Equally, in reporting the OFC crash all have since overlooked their role in promoting the second ostrich coming (the first was in the last century when the lure was not meat but feathers). Post-OFC, the *Independent on Sunday* (14 April) even managed to warn that the DTI was looking at other ostrich farming operations while running an ad for the Ostrich Centre on another page!

The willingness of newspapers to lend themselves to such a high risk scheme and/or con as OFC is not new. Nor is the subsequent forgetfulness. But in the case of OFC there were ample warning signs which should not have been ignored — even by hard pressed newspapers.

OFC's inflated claims of returns of 51.6 percent and then 57 percent in one year and projected returns of almost 200 percent in five years were red light enough. But there were other signals which not only investors but newspapers ignored.

Last December the *Mail on Sunday* disclosed that Brian Ketchell, one of two OFC directors, had been involved with two collapsible companies since 1991 and had been a participant in the Alchemy pyramid selling company which the DTI closed down in 1994. OFC had also hired as a sales agent in Spain a former investment adviser whose firm cost clients £12 million when it folded and who was banned from being a director.

An examination of the limited public information on OFC — it was only formed in December 1994, despite recent ads stating "since 1986 our farming services have grown" — would have shown it to be half-owned by Albert and Doreen Hancock who had been involved with Ketchell in the failed Full Force video shop business. Ketchell was not listed as a shareholder. The other 50 percent is held by co-director Allen Walker.

Full Force appears to have taken over where Ketchell and his company Video Magic left off. It was formed the following year, 1992, by the Hancocks. In December 1993 they made way for Ketchell. Three months later the company collapsed owing creditors — including Ketchell, who claimed £53,000 — more than £300,000. Most of the £75,000 assets were swallowed by two banks.

Within months the Hancocks and Ketchell were back in business with former car dealer Walker in OFC. Inquiries into the Full Force collapse are still being made by the liquidator.

Another potential red light was the resignation of OFC's auditors BDO Stoy Hayward in June last year. The auditors claimed they might otherwise breach professional guidelines regarding a conflict of interest between themselves and OFC.

Inquiries in Belgium where the OFC ostrich "herd" is to be found (somewhat to the surprise of sceptics who still wonder whether there are as many ostriches as there are owners — a point yet to be proved) would also have gleaned that there had been mysterious fires and thefts at the farms (but not yet that other old standby,the mysterious flood) which had somewhat reduced ostrich numbers. Investors would also have found that, like in Britain, ostrich meat was a very acquired taste and costs three times the price of chicken to acquire.

But the ads alone should have warned off all but the congenital victim. Take the claims made in the initial advertisement.

● "51.6 percent minimum return annually". Based on OFC's chick buy-back guarantee, this was too good to be true on no knowledge other than history. That impression is confirmed by what similar ostrich farms abroad earn. And there was no guarantee for OFC itself — as investors now know only too well.

● "An asset that continues to appreciate." But to become more popular ostrich meat needs to be cheaper, which means more ostriches which means lower prices which means less value and lower buy-back prices. Depreciation not appreciation was inevitable if OFC's claims were true. No wonder the guarantee period was five years rather than the "25-year commercial breeding life". All that was appreciating was the OFC entry price — by March it had risen from £14,400 to £17,700 per bird.

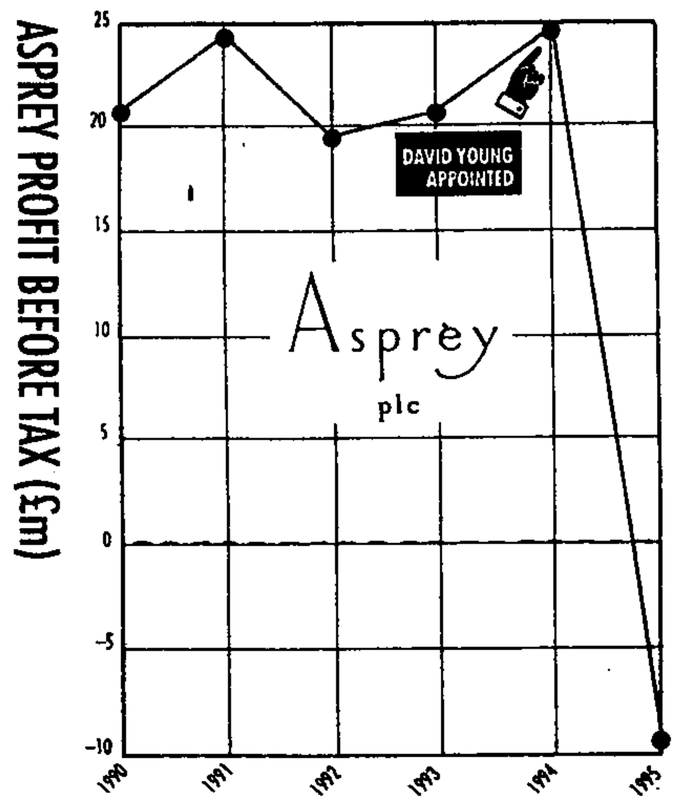
● "An asset that is wholly owned by you." Yes indeed — except it happens to be in Belgium and therefore somewhat harder to check or oversee despite later ads proclaiming "the wonderful benefit... is the control you exercise over your asset". First find then catch your ostrich.

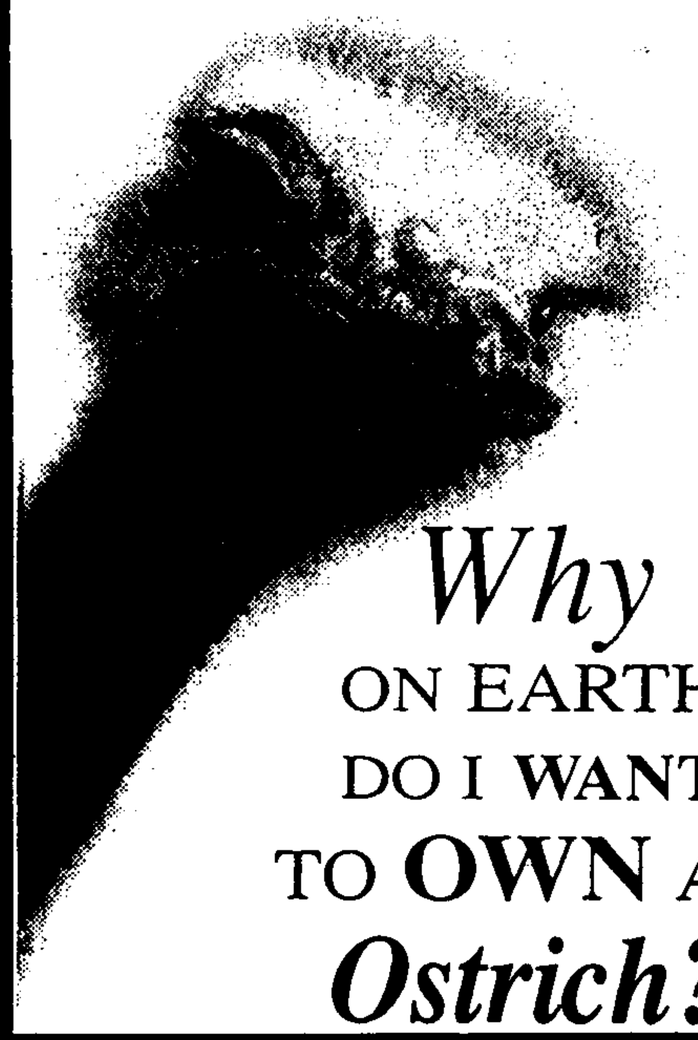
OFC could not have happened but for the loophole in the financial services act which excludes investment in animals. One benefit of the OFC crash could be a closing of that loophole, empowering the Securities & Investment Board to regulate such schemes. Another might be a rule barring newspapers from accepting ads for any investment which is not regulated by SIB or protected by the Investors Compensation Scheme.

Meanwhile OFC's ostrich investors prove yet again that there is indeed one born every minute — which is faster even than OFC's ostriches manage. But then they don't spend *all* their time with their heads buried in the sand. Even with their tiny brains they can work out that if you do, you die.

'Slicker'

British Management Part 34.
DAVID YOUNG, Chairman North Herts NHS Trust, Director Lombard Insurance Group, Director Wates, Deputy Chairman Touche Ross & Co 1990-1993. Director Asprey since July 1993.





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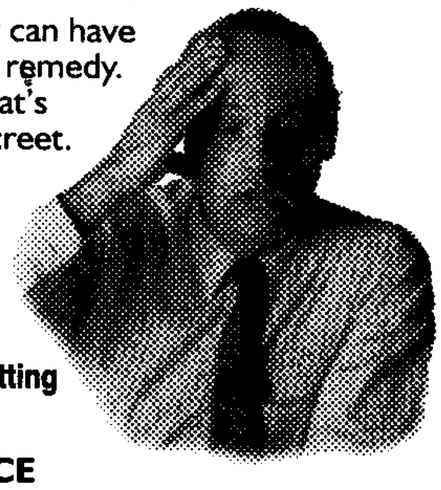

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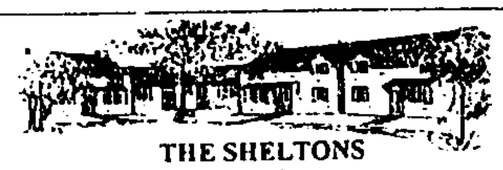
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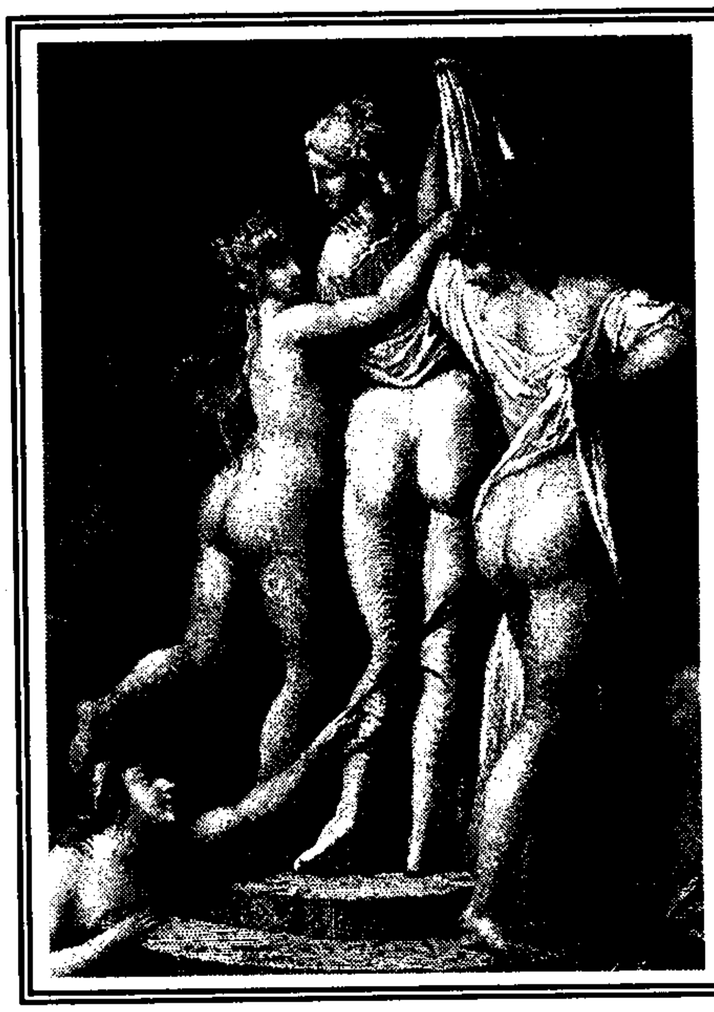

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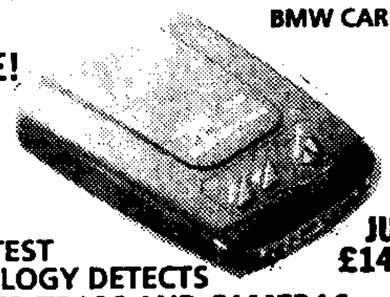
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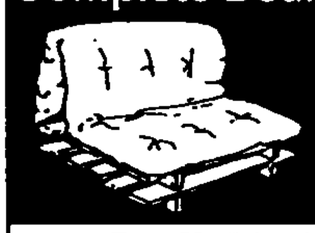

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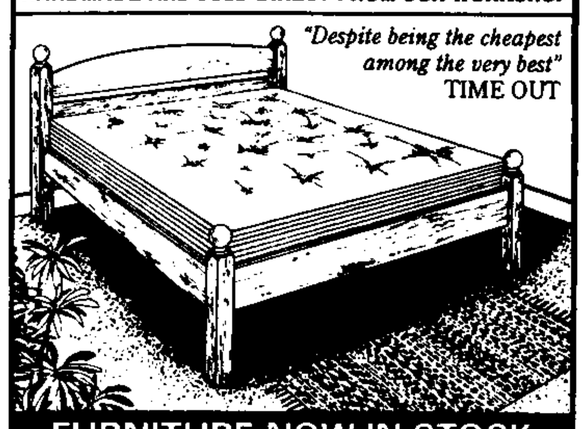

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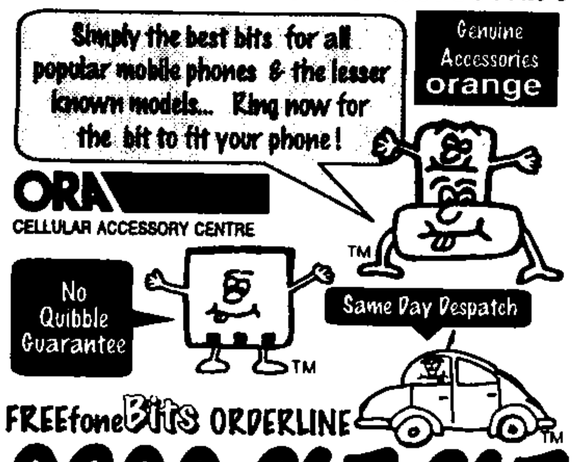
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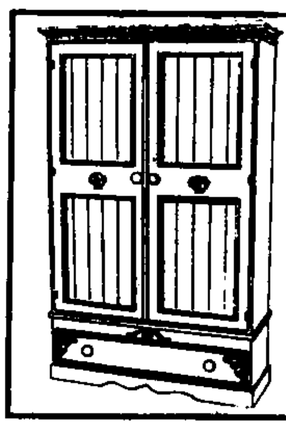

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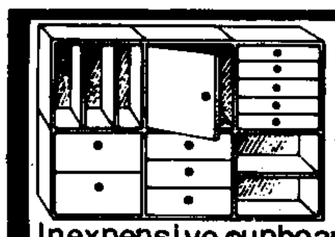

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❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

❒ Do you prefer town life?
❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Do you have many friends of your own sex?
❒ Are you interested in current affairs?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Do you like team activities?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
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6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

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